

***For An Ideal:***

The Maronites left their wealth,  
crossed mountains and valleys  
and converted hard rocks into a  
fertile land.

***Through***

their work,  
their unity,  
their prayer  
and their perseverance.

*This is how they kept their faith and passed  
it on to their posterity.*

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**THE MARONITE RITE**

***Questions on the Maronites***

August, 1978



**MARONITE  
DIOCESE OF SAINT MAROUN'S OF  
SYDNEY  
AUSTRALIA**







the good example. To obey is divine. Obedience unite us to God through the Superior and shortens the distance between the Divine Will and Ours. At this level of devotion God is all for us all. God is the supreme Master. He is the One Who is God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

His obedience was the protector of his poverty and charity. In the communication with God nothing is interposed. There is thus a mystic union, a transformation of his inner soul Sharbel he lived. He was radiant, the supreme wealth is poverty of the one who says to the Lord: I want to imitate you in all my ways in life. Chastity is nothing else but poverty before God in our renunciation of selfishness burdened by the flesh and the World.

Thus Sharbel, a Saint of this Christian Orient comes to repeat to this rationalist world in which we live that only christian values represent the real values in life.

United with God through a union which goes beyond the simple exercise of prayer, Sharbel had wanted to take seriously his christian life, his baptism and his dedication to the Lord.

The Church, after having declared him "Blessed" at the end of Vatican II in the presence of the imposing Assembly of Cardinals, Bishops and priests and before the crowd of faithfuls, The Church has canonised him on the 9th October when the Synod of Bishops, was gathered in its ordinary session.

To the face of the world Sharbel is a glory and a pearl in the crown of the Church. He is the property of us all. He is also the glory of the land of the Cedars, Lebanon which rejoices today in the knowledge that one of her sons has entered in the holiness of Saints. He is the glory of the Order which gave him — submitted to the Church — the principles of inner life and sanctity.

Joy for all Christians, joy for all men who see chiefs leading generously towards the road of peace, happiness, justice through the true depths where men discovered themselves in an authentic sense of fraternisation.

CONSECRATION OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON CHURCH  
SYDNEY, 6th AUGUST, 1978

## THE MARONITE RITE

### *Questions on the Maronites*

August, 1978



MARONITE  
DIOCESE OF SAINT MAROUN'S OF  
SYDNEY  
AUSTRALIA



At the time where rationalism was budding, when God was being considered like an obsolescent stranger on this Earth; on a desolate hill of the Lebanese soil lived and died a Saint who through life as in death has told the world that God existed, that God is love, and that spiritual values remained the only sheet anchors of salvation for a Humanity caught by the waves of atheism and materialism. We know in fact that when "matter" becomes "absolute" man forsakes his human values. Nothing would free him; but through spiritual values which guide him towards the depths of quietude and happiness.

Sharbel MAKHLOUF who according to the world was a simple man and an ignorant has judged the world and is still judging it. Saint Paul said that the Lord chooses the ignorant of this world to confound the strong and mighty.

Entered poor in a religious Order he wanted to continue imitating his Lord-Master through the total practice of poverty . . . Earthly wealth had no attraction to him: His only need was the Lord.

His faith was immense: nourished at the sources of "Revelation" and teachings of the Church; it was for him the "light" which illuminates the path and leads towards the Creator. He remained in adoration before the sacred sacrament and drew from the Christ-Eucharist the necessary strength to relive Christ's solitude on the Mount of Olives. And from this stand he was giving others an abundance of lessons, he was urging christians to draw strength from the depths of God's Heart.

This faith was at the base of his profound charity towards all. He saw in everyone the work of God Who made man at this image and resemblance.

He understood quite well that the charity he practised made life look pale and empty. The charity which is God fills every existence. It renders it, in the sense of Christ Who died for love, active and dynamic. There is no greater love than that when one dies for those one loves.

This understanding of charity disciplined Sharbel from an early age towards total obedience. Devoted to his religious work; seeing God manifested in his Superiors; living deprived and freed from his own will, Sharbel was able to say during all his existence that greatness does not lie in titles. True greatness is found in one's submission and one's practice of humility: To serve God is to reign.

It is not easy to obey. But Christ learnt to obey so as to give us



SERMON DELIVERED BY HIS GRACE ABDO KHALIFE,  
MARONITE ARCHBISHOP OF AUSTRALIA  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE CANONISATION OF  
SHARBEL MAKHLOUF, ON THE 6th NOVEMBER, 1977

He belongs to the heights where the Spirit blows. Men who are inspired take refuge on the peaks of solitudes where they find themselves and find their conscience wherein liveth the Lord.

One of those inspired men of the last Century, ignored by all saved God; ignored and forsaken an austere Monk abandoned to prayer lived on the peak of mountains nourishing only one desire, that desire was to seek the Lord in the intimacy of his righteousness and in the freedom of a soul rid of all worldly links, no matter how sacred where those links. This Monk, this holy Monk was SHARBEL MAKHLOUF.

In the Century of rationalism and materialism in which he lived Sharbel could have been considered as someone with no dedication to world sciences. He did not espouse current philosophical thoughts of the Century. He is to be found enshrined in a wealth of inner life, which alone gives value and significance to the world around us. He did not labour the Earth which passes but laboured the hard and demanding friendship of the Lord, the face of whom is constantly rejuvenated by dazzling splendor and perceived only by those who can see him through the eyes of faith and adoration.

There is, in effect, a whole secret World, an inner World where the riches pile up and nourish man's mind. These riches are thus for him a source of faith, charity, happiness where God's presence is felt and through which He invades the soul which then judges itself, free of every thing and possessing all.

Nothing interests him anymore. Everything around him pushes him towards God. He draws back and all humanity joins with him in adoration, prayer and penance. God's friendship is very demanding.

At this level of inner freedom, Sharbel journeying from the simple faith and simple intelligence of things of the Lord has reached his goal. He has discovered in the intimacy of his conscience the fullness of God. I mean by this the mystic union which ravishes, enthuses and pacifies. And because of this he had been the conscience of his era.

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conception. He kept her body from the corruption of the tomb and glorified her in heaven by a divine assumption". Finally this passage of St. John of Damascus sums up the doctrine: "It was proper that the one who remained a Virgin in her conception, should be preserved in her body after death without corruption. It was proper that the one who bore the Creator as a child in her womb should live in the dwelling place of God. It was proper that the spouse chosen by the Father should live in a heavenly home. It was proper that she who saw her Son on the Cross, she who conceived him in her womb, should see Him seated with His Father. It was proper that the Mother of God should reign over all that affects her Son and that all creation should venerate her as the Mother and Servant of God".

In conclusion mention must be made of many other attributes of Mary in the East all of which derive from those we have treated. For example, Mary, the Co-redeemer at the foot of the Cross; Mary, the Mediatrix with her Son; Mary, Queen of the universe with her Son and her God; Mary, the Help of Christians, etc. The litanies of the Virgin which are recited in the Eastern Churches weave crowns of glory for her and describe in simple form the faith of the people of God, their attachment to Mary and their deep devotion to her. She is, of all creatures, the most highly placed after her only Son.

Finally, let us just list the biblical symbols in which the Eastern Churches see allusions to the Virgin Mary; the name of Eve, mother of all the living; Jacob's Ladder; the burning bush; the Ark of the Covenant; the staff of Aaron; Gideon's fleece; the spouse of Canticles; the sealed garden and wisdom. Furthermore she is compared with illustrious biblical women such as: Sarah, the mother of Isaac; Rebecca, the mother of Jacob; Rachel, the mother of Joseph; Anna, the mother of Samuel; Judith; Esther; the Mother of Maccabees; and with other symbols such as: the Holy City; the cloud; the red sea; the rock; the three children in the fiery furnace and Jonah.

The natural conclusion to our paper is this: "Gabriel has come to you, Mary, has told you what God had decided from all eternity, has saluted you with enthusiasm saying: "Rejoice unseeded soil; rejoice bush that doesn't burn; rejoice depth that no eye can plumb; rejoice bridge that leads to the skies; rejoice ladder that climbs to the Most High; the Lord is with you"!



before the Patriarch Nestorius in 430. A little later sermons of Eusebius of Caesarea mention this feast. From Jerusalem the feast spread to Asia Minor and in the year 500 Bishop Abraham introduced it into Ephesus. This is amongst the most ancient feasts of the Blessed Virgin.

#### 4. THE ASSUMPTION

The Blessed Virgin was assumed body and soul into heaven. From time immemorial the Christian East has believed in Mary's Assumption. As the liturgy says, it is the feast of her dormition, that is, the feast of her assumption body and soul into heaven.

The historian Baumstark points out that the Church of Antioch celebrated this feast from the end of the Fourth Century under the title of "The memory of St. Mary, the ever-virgin Mother of God". But the feast only gained recognition after the accession of the Emperor Maurice (582) who ordered that such a feast worthy of the Mother of God shall be celebrated everywhere. At the request of the Christian people, this same Emperor in 588 transferred the feast of the Assumption or the Dormition of the Virgin from the 18th January to the 15th August because people wanted to celebrate it in summer.

The Assumption is the only feast of the Blessed Virgin preceded by a period of fast and abstinence. It lasts for fourteen days during which time many Christians will only eat boiled vegetables and fruit.

The Assumption of Mary is her greatest feast in the East because it is the last of her feasts, their summary and crown.

The Scriptures are silent on the Assumption; however many allusions are found in the Psalms, the Canticle of Canticles, Isaiah, the Apocalypse of St. John and the Gospel of St. Luke.

On these allusions tradition will build, or from this evidence tradition will live as the source of our faith.

A most important witness is John of Damascus who said this: "When the angels witnessed the dormition of the pure Virgin they were astonished, remarking how this Virgin Mary was raised to glory" and he adds: "The king of nations has given you what surpasses nature, for as He kept you Virgin in your birth, so He guarded your body in the tomb and has glorified you by drawing you nearer to himself in your divine Assumption. That is how the Son treats his mother". Again he says: "As He kept her a Virgin in her

#### MY DEAR MARONITE PEOPLE,

Your forefathers have left you a rich and versatile patrimony. You should be proud of it. But memory, faculty of forgetfulness, leads you through the necessities of daily life to bypass your heritage and cut yourselves off from your origin. Yet man's worth is related to the quality of his origin, the way he developed what he received, and how he benefits from it in his day to day experiences through whatever country he had journeyed, wherever he had lived.

This little booklet has no other aim but to awaken in you the echo of centuries of glorious history so as to re-acquaint you with the values which are rightfully yours: spiritual values, values of the mind, human values, values of a people who lived honourably in all the circumstances of life and endured persecutions in the defence of his faith, his freedom, his native land.

The Church, represented by His Holiness Pope PAUL VI had wished to assemble the large Maronite Community under the crossier of one Shepherd, entrusting him the tasks of guiding you steadily in reliving your Rite and traditions with the intensity you are accustomed; this is the evident intention of the Vatican II Council contained in its enactment on the Oriental Catholic Churches.

"Such individual Churches, whether of the East or the West, are of equal dignity, so that none of them is superior to the others by reason of Rite. They enjoy the same rights and are under the same obligations, even with respect to preaching the Gospel to the whole world under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff" (Art. 3).

"Therefore, attention should everywhere be given to the preservation and growth of each individual Church. For this purpose, *parishes and a special hierarchy should be established for each* . . . Finally, each and every Catholic should everywhere retain his proper Rite, cherish it and observe it to the best of his ability . . ." (Art. 4).

"History, tradition and numerous ecclesiastical institutions manifest luminously how much the Universal Church is indebted to the Eastern Churches. This Sacred Synod, therefore, not only honours this ecclesiastical and spiritual heritage with merited esteem and rightful praise, but also, unhesitatingly, looks upon it as the heritage of Christ's Universal Church" (Art. 5).



"All Eastern Rite members should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their lawful liturgical Rites and their established way of life, and that these should not be altered except by way of an appropriate and organic development. Easterners themselves should honour all these things with the greatest fidelity. Besides, they should acquire an ever greater knowledge and a more exact use of them. *If they have improperly fallen away from them because of circumstances of time or personage, let them take pains to return to their ancestral ways*" (Art. 6).

Enlightened vocational guidance and resolute directives! The Church has declared herself in favour of preserving the Oriental tradition against any deterioration and to draw from it, as from the living water, that which quenches the spiritual thirst of those whose soul has been moulded by countless customs and traditions.

Such climate should encourage you to reinstate a practice your forefathers lived and loved with fervor and effectiveness.

Lebanon remains a land of inspiration and deep faith. The grottos where Hermites and spiritual leaders of the Maronite Church took refuge tell us today how much we have to be proud of a past loaded with the scent of faith and tradition of the most authentic Christianity. From all times attached to the Seat of Peter, Faithful to the teaching of Rome, the Maronite Church prides herself with a faithfulness that knew no decline throughout her history.

The Maronites have given the Church many Saints: the Brothers Massabki, Saint Charbel Makhlouf and long before them, the Confessors of the faith, the Martyrs and the holy people who lived of their faith and breathed constantly the will of Our Lord! Saint Maron, father of our Church, example of prayer, abnegation, unselfishness and intense union with God. The scent of his sanctity drew towards him crowds journeying in great number beckoning his prayers and intercession.

Let us be proud of our ancestors who were not only men of prayers and Saints, but also people who were able to radiate their patrimony across christian Europe and the civilised World. They have taught in the great universities. They have been accepted in Royal Courts, they have dispensed the sciences and cultures of the Orient. They have laboured at uniting the Christians and have been the Apostles of the true and authentic faith.

Century) it is obvious that this feast was celebrated in certain dioceses of the East with a magnificence equal to that of the greatest feasts. From that time the feast became widespread in the West according to the historian Baronius thanks to an event in which England was miraculously saved from a Danish invasion.

From the Fifteenth Century, Popes began to attach many indulgences to the celebration of this feast. Later, following its proclamation as a dogma in 1854 it became a feast of obligation like the other great feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The origin of the feast of the Nativity of Mary is to be found in Jerusalem in the Fifth Century. Romanos the Musician composed a liturgy for it. It was introduced into the West before the pontificate of Sergius I (687-701). In 1250 Innocent IV composed a new office with an octave and in the Fourteenth Century Gregory XI added a liturgical vigil.

The feast of Mary's Presentation in the Temple comes from the apocryphal Gospel of St. James. It is hard to trace why this feast was celebrated on the 21st November. It is maintained by some authors that on the 21st November in 543 a new church was dedicated to Mary in Constantinople and that the feast of the dedication this church became the feast of the Presentation.

St. Andrew of Crete has three sermons extant on this feast which lead us to believe it existed between 685 and 740 or at least towards the end of the 7th Century.

In the West we know that Pope Gregory XI introduced it in Avignon and celebrated it in 1372. We learn this from Philippe Mezier, the Cyprian ambassador to the Holy See who later spoke to Pope Gregory about the celebration which took place in the East on the occasion of this feast. The Pope had the office for this feast brought from the East and having studied it he confirmed it and ordered it to be celebrated. Pope Sixtus V made it a feast of obligation for the universal Church in 1585 by the following decree: "We wish that the feast of the Presentation in the temple be celebrated solemnly everywhere in the world and that it be equal to all the other feasts of Mary. We order that this feast should be counted among the feasts which the catholic Church has consecrated to honour the Temple of God".

Coming now to the feast of the Annunciation, documentation shows that it was celebrated in Jerusalem around the year 400. The historian St. Theophanus spoke of the sermon St. Proclus preached



Palamas, Theophanus of Nicea, Nicholas Cabasilas, Emmanuel Paleologus. But the greatest who lent his name to the Masterly defence of the Immaculate Conception was George Scholarios. All, in fact, salute in Mary an exemplary human superiority, an exemplary perfect creature in whom the thought of God was realized according to the original plan of creation.

Before the Sixteenth Century, opponents of the Immaculate Conception are few and unimportant. But at this period denials of this doctrine swept through the orthodox East for various reasons; principally the infiltration of the protestant reformation followed by ignorance of the great tradition of the East. After Constantinople fell into the hands of Islam in 1453, the Byzantines could no longer develop their own culture. They had to travel to the West to enrol in Catholic Universities in Italy or Protestant Universities in Germany or England. These latter were influenced by the thinking of the Protestant Reformation. Those who studied in Catholic Universities discovered a division on the question of the Immaculate Conception.

Another reason is found in bad understanding of both the nature of original sin and the teaching of the Catholic Church. A final reason is one of a psychological order: Before the II Vatican Council it was understandable, but today there is no longer any reason for it, viz., opposing anything once the Catholic Church taught or defined a doctrine.

It is of some interest here, before passing on to the Assumption of Mary, to pause and examine the place of Mary in the Eastern Liturgies.

The first document we have relating to the feast of the Immaculate Conception is a text from St. Andrew of Crete in 740 which begins with these words: "Sainly Anne, we are celebrating today your conception because you have been freed from the ties of your infertility and have conceived the one who will conceive Him whom nothing can contain".

Between the Eighth and Tenth Centuries there are many references to this feast of the Immaculate Conception. In the second half of the Eighth Century, Peter, Bishop of Argus, proclaimed this feast to be the herald and harbinger of all other feasts because it announced and prepared for all of them. From the sermons of George, The Bishop of Nicodemia, and Euthymius of Constantinople (Tenth

Lastly Lebanese people have been a bridge between East and West. They have given to the World the Charter of the Human Rights. They are the loyal citizens of the motherland and the no less loyal citizens of the country which extended its hospitality to them.

One of the characteristics of the Maronites is their great devotion to the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Lebanon. Such devotion motivated them to build in Sydney a sanctuary to Mary which is fast becoming a Centre of pilgrimage and prayers for all Maronites and Australians and for all the Lebanese Community, which likewise nourish towards Mary the same love and devotion.

The Maronites have given the World Saint Charbel and many such men of good and silence. Saint Maron who was a hermit has been by his virtues the founder of a homeland and a Nation. This homeland and this Nation have been generously watered by the precious blood of Martyrs.

#### CONCLUSION:

The Robe of Christ, revealed in the Scripture, is ornated by varied riches. These riches are the many Churches who are the jealous guardians of our Patrimony. In conclusion, may I incite you all towards charity, understanding, serving the common cause for the good of the Church and the Glory of God; always aware of your bonds with your Maronite spiritual patrimony.

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ and in  
Saint Maroun

+ ABDO KHALIFE  
Maronite Archbishop-Bishop of St.  
Maroun of Sydney

N.B.

This Booklet comprises two parts: The first is entirely inspired from the book of His Excellency Msgr Francis Zayek, Bishop of St. Maron in Detroit, U.S.A.: "The Maronite Rite", a Catechism; and a book of His Excellency Msgr Roland Abi Jaoudi: "Questions on the Maronites".

The second part comprises the papers I have submitted at the time of the Marian Congress in Sydney, September 1976.

August 1978



## THEIR ORIGINS

### WHO WAS SAINT MARON?

Saint Maron was a famous hermit from Syria (Patriarchate of Antioch). He was born about the year 350. He became a priest and then a hermit, retiring to a mountain of Taurus, near Antioch, above the banks of Oronte River. There he transformed an old pagan temple into a shrine of the true God, where many disciples joined him and all formed into one Community. He founded the North Syrian School of Cenobitism (Anchories). He spent his life praying, sacrificing, healing and preaching the Catholic doctrine against the heretics of those days. Besides, he was a close friend to Saint John Chrysostom. One of his disciples, Abraham, went to the mountains of Lebanon as a missionary. He is recognised as the first maronite missionary to have been sent to Lebanon and to have converted many of the heathen mountaineers. Soon many people from all over Lebanon joined the Maronites.

Saint Maron died about the year 410. The news of his death was the occasion of imposing manifestations of faith and love in the surrounding area. His mortal remains were deposited in a grave upon which probably a Church and monastery bearing his name were erected.

### WHO ARE THE MARONITES?

The Maronites are the direct descendants of the people who received the Catholic faith from the Apostles. They joined the hermit Maron and followed his rule. Some became monks or hermits, some others, while remaining lay people, became "of those of Saint Maron's".

The Maronites are a Roman Catholic religious Community. They have been faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church throughout the centuries. Since their beginning they have shown obedience and loyalty to the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451). Saint Maron's Monastery was erected for the purpose of defending the teachings of that Council and later on became its main stronghold. In 517 A.D. 350 Maronite monks were martyred defending its Decrees and are commemorated on July 31.

The Maronites have their own liturgy, their own canon law and their own Patriarch. They started originally as an ecclesiastical grouping of Christians who assembled around the hermit Maron who kept them in the faith they had received from the Apostles, and whose name their descendants still bear.

head of the serpent, the one and only, who is pure in body and soul, perfect in holiness". Contrasting Mary to Eve, Ephrem said: "Both are pure, both have been made like each other in every respect, but one has become the cause of our death, the other the cause of our life".

In the Fifth Century Marian theology developed after the Council of Ephesus, for example, Theodotus of Ancyra wrote: "Instead of the virgin Eve who caused death, God has created a Virgin full of grace to give us life, a pure virgin, holy in body and soul, a lily among thorns, a virgin full of divine grace, the spouse of God in her heart".

The priest Hesychius of Jerusalem has statements completing the preceding such as: "Mary is the most perfect of all women, Jewel of Virgins, glory of the earth of which we are formed. The heat of passion has not reached her and the worm of concupiscence has not touched her".

Between the Sixth and Ninth Centuries it is interesting to see Marian theology taking shape till it reaches its full development. Romanos the Musician, inspired poet of the Virgin, tells us that Mary is free from all stain, a flower unblemished. Sophronius of Jerusalem (638) sings of the glory of the Redeemer who has entered the pure womb of Mary, preserved her from every stain in her body, soul and mind . . . the difference between the other children of Adam and Mary is that she has been purified before the stain of sin could touch her they afterwards".

St. Andrew of Crete (740) reduced the holiness of Mary to three points:

1. The Virgin's conception and birth are holy;
2. She is the daughter of God by a special title;
3. She is the dawn of the new creation and God has adorned her with exceptional beauty.

Germanus of Constantinople (733) bases all his Marian theology on this principle: "Any reference to You, Mother of God, is marvellous, surpassing nature, surpassing the spoken word"!

From the Ninth to the Fifteenth Century, dissidents were disappearing except for Nicephorus Cassios and Isidore of Thessalonica who crop up in the Fifteenth Century and who were extremely embarrassed by statements they made and later regretted. On the positive side in this period were the theologians like Michael Psellos, Theophylactus of Bulgaria, Michael Glycas, Gregory



### 3. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

This ever-Virgin Mother of God was born immaculate. The Creator, in preparing Mary to become the Mother of his Son, has preserved her from all stain of original sin under which all human kind except two have been born — the human nature of Christ, the Word Incarnate and the ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

Following the teaching of Eastern Christianity from the Fourth till the Ninth Centuries, particularly during the period following the Council of Ephesus and more particularly in the period following the institution of the two feasts of the nativity of Mary and her Immaculate Conception, we find wonderful harmony in the statements relating to the Immaculate Conception. Of note are: Ephrem the Syrian, and Epiphanius in the Fourth Century, Proclus in the Fifth, Sophronius in the Seventh, Andrew of Crete, Germanus of Constantinople and John Damascene in the Eighth and Theodore the Studite, Photius and his friend George of Nicomedia in the Ninth Century. All of these clearly affirm that God has intervened, in a special way, to sanctify the conception of the Mother of God.

It is worth noting that often the faith of the laity precedes the teaching of theologians and that of the Church. Interestingly the Apocryphal Gospel of James, written in the second half of the Second Century had a great influence on various eastern liturgies. This apocryphal gospel clearly insists on the holiness of Mary, a holiness which has flooded her soul from her creation and has prevented her being stained by original sin so that she might become the Mother of God.

In the writings of the Fathers prior to the Council of Nicea, 325, we find no clear statements but their writings do contain formulas and attributes which indicate their belief in the integrity of Mary, for example, "He who is all pure came forth in a pure manner from the pure womb He himself has created". In addition to this we find comparisons between Mary and Eve, between Christ and Adam, Christ who is the second Adam and Mary who is the second Eve.

Between the Councils of Nicea and Ephesus, the principal problem occupying the theologians and Fathers of the Church was that of Arius and Arianism. Nevertheless there are some references in the works of Epiphanius of Salamis, Timothy of Jerusalem and Ephrem the Syrian. Epiphanius compares Mary with Eve and points out that Mary's preservation from death was a sign of her preservation from original sin. As for Ephrem, his writings are full of references to the Immaculate Conception, for example, "The woman who crushed the

DOCUMENT: PETITION BY THE MONKS OF SECOND SYRIA TO  
POPE HORMISDAS, IN 517 \*

"Presented by the humble servants, the superiors of the convents in the districts of Second Syria, to his Holiness and Sublime Sanctity, to Hormisdas, the Universal Patriarch, who sits in the See of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles. (Then the usual greetings.)

"Because the grace of Christ, Our Lord, inspired us to have recourse to your Beatitude, like one who takes refuge from the heavy rains and storms in a safe port, we believe that such things (the storms of persecution) will not hurt us, because even though we suffer the direct hardship, we bear it with joy, believing, as we do that. The sufferings of this world are as nothing compared with the eternal glory that will be revealed to us. Because Christ, Our Lord, the Supreme Pastor, has established you Doctor and Physician to every soul, we deem it our duty to reveal to you what persecution we have suffered . . ."

Among the signatures:

- 1-I, Alexander, Priest, Superior of the Convent of St. Maron.
- 2-1, Simon, Priest and Superior, as above.
- 3-1, John, Deacon, Superior, as above.
- 4-1, Procopius, Priest, Superior.

There are 200 other signatures to this letter.

\* Cited in Paul Abraham, *The Maronites of Lebanon* (Wheeling, W. Va: Our Lady of Lebanon Church, 1931), pp. 32-33.

### MARONITE RITE

#### WHAT IS A RITE?

A Rite is a liturgical and disciplinary system to which persons in the Church are affiliated (Système liturgique et disciplinaire auquel se rattachent les personnes dans l'Eglise). When we say "Rite" we think about a special liturgy, hierarchy, clergy and faithful who follow a particular ritual and are governed by special traditional, liturgical and disciplinary laws. In their beginnings, the different Rites evolved from the four great Patriarchates: Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople and Rome (the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was absorbed). The Patriarchate of Constantinople, which was created later, grew and became important because of the Emperors of Byzantium (2nd Rome) and the Arab invasion of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt, territories of the Patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria.



The word "Rite" can be confusing at times. For instance, the different canonical Byzantine Rites are the same liturgically. The Roman (Latin) Rite has various but limited liturgies. The following are also called Rites: Ambrosian (Italy), Lyonais (France), Mozarabic (Spain) and Braga (Portugal); not to mention the Rites peculiar to certain religions, such as Dominicans, Carmelites and Carthusians.

IF EASTERN AND WESTERN LITURGIES AND LAWS ARE SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME, WHAT IS THE ADVANTAGE OF PRESERVING THE MARONITE RITE?

The Rites of the Church are of equal dignity, right and esteem, whether Western or Eastern. Large or small membership of a particular Rite has no bearing of superiority in the eyes of the law. The truths of the Holy Gospel, tradition, as well as the essential parts of the liturgies are the same for all Rites, and this cannot be otherwise. However, the expression, understanding and adaptation of these truths, as related to time, people, custom and manner of worship are not, cannot and should not be the same. These differences in the Catholic Church are apostolic, worthy of respect, and they constitute the spiritual richness of the Church. The Church finds her unity in the diversity of her Rites. Maronites are proud that they belong to the Patriarchate of Antioch and can trace their liturgy and Rite back to the time of the Apostles. At the Consecration of the Oblations, for instance, Maronite priests use the same language and pronounce the same words that Christ used and pronounced. According to the Second Vatican Council, the Eastern Rites are to be held in high esteem because of their venerable antiquity. There is freedom in the Church, and all are free to worship God according to their mentality and the spirituality of their Rite. The cosmopolitan character of Antioch and its importance in communications suited her admirably to serve as the centre of the early Christian mission for the Gentiles. It was in Antioch that the Disciples were first called Christians (Acts II, 26). Antioch was captured by the Arabs in 638 and was, therefore, precluded from carrying out her great missionary work. Catholics should bear in mind that there are more than 200 million members of the Eastern Churches in the world, and the great majority of them belong to the Orthodox Church.

WHY ISN'T THERE ONE UNIVERSAL RITE FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH?

Since Apostolic times, different Rites have developed in the course of Church history and have become integral parts of the Church.

The Liturgy, again expressing the faith of Christian people says: "He who is born of the Father before time began without the need of a mother, has become incarnate on earth in you, Mary, without knowing a father".

The prophet Isaiah said "The virgin is with child and shall bear a son and she will call him Emmanuel". The dogmatic developments of this prophecy by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Ephrem the Syrian are sufficient to reassure us about the holy tradition which has existed from earliest times: "She has conceived as a Virgin; she has given birth as a Virgin; she remains ever a Virgin".

Among other liturgical texts are these: "The Virgin has conceived and given birth and remained a Virgin" or "She has carried in her arms He who holds all creatures in his hands. At the same time she is virgin and mother" or again, "The mystery is immense, the miracle singular: a virgin has carried You, the Creator of all things in her womb — she gave birth to her maker and remains forever a virgin" or finally, "O Mother of God, the Almighty has done great things for you, since He preserved you as a pure virgin even after giving birth".

Other formulas too shed light on this truth of the virginity of Mary, for example, "We glorify you, Mother of God, saying, you are the bush in which Moses saw the fire of divinity burning like a flame yet the bush was not burnt" or this one: "O Mother of God, you are a secret paradise because you have given birth to Christ, who through you has planted on earth the tree of the cross which carries life". And finally: "O perpetual Virgin, Mother of God, present our prayer to your Son, our God. Ask Him to save us through your intercession. If you do this, our prayer will not rebound on us sinners but will always be efficacious".

Nevertheless, heretics in every age continued to attack the Virginity of Mary. We find in our own time people who are offended by a virginity without equal. Having lost the sense of the supernatural, the sense of the Creator intervening in human history, they no longer see God at work and wish to deprive Him of his glory as Creator. The Council which brought together both East and West, held in Lyon in 1274 declared: "The Son of God is born in time, of the Holy Spirit and the ever-Virgin Mary". This doctrinal statement was translated into different expressions but was eventually crystallised in the following formula — "You have saved sinners by giving birth to salvation, you who were a Virgin before conception, during conception and after giving birth".



from her his complete human nature uniting it with the divine Person of the Word of God.

From all eternity, Mary was predestined to be the Mother of God. At the annunciation, God, while respecting her freedom, asked for her free consent to co-operate in the work of salvation: Mary entered freely and firmly from that time until Calvary into the designs of the Creator who willed to bring salvation to sinful man. This all-holy virgin, adorned with every virtue, is at the same time the Mother of God. He who resolved to redeem the world when the appointed time came by sending his Son, born of a woman, to make us his adopted children.

Liturgical usage is always a good thermometer for judging the spiritual health of the Church. In the holy liturgy we find formulas like these: "You are more worthy than the cherubims, greater than the seraphims because you alone have conceived in your womb the God whom nothing can contain" or again: "Rejoice O holy dwelling place of the most high, for by you, O Mother of God, he has granted joy to those who call on you. Blessed are you among women, O Queen, pure of all sin".

## 2. MOTHER AND VIRGIN

This Mother of God, Mary, remained a virgin. Mother and Virgin — these two truths are always present in Eastern tradition which loves to repeat: "Mother of God, O Virgin"! The same Council of Ephesus confirmed what the creed had said in stating the anathema against Nestorius: "Whoever does not confess that the Mother of God is a Holy Virgin, let him be anathema".

Really the anathema was not necessary, but in those days this was the way of strengthening faith. The Eastern Church today as in the past, is capable of shedding its blood in defence of the virginity of Mary. Indeed the phrase, Virgin or Virgin Mary is in practice much more frequently used than the title "Mother of God". But this is not to say that people think that the title "Virgin" is more important than the title "Mother of God". She is Virgin because she is Mother of God. This is a truth which has never been contested but taken for granted. Pope Leo the Great, in a letter he addressed to Flavian Patriarch of Constantinople in 449 expressed the faith of the East in these words: "The Virgin has conceived and at the same time preserved her virginity".

When the Apostles dispersed, following the persecution against the Church in Jerusalem over St. Stephen's death, they fully understood that they should not take their Jerusalem-centred culture to the unbelievers. They had, therefore, to adapt to the psychological and cultural development of different countries and people. They followed the local customs of greeting people, worshipping and praying to God. When St. Mark, for instance, went to Alexandria, Egypt, he had to develop a Christian liturgy which would appeal to the Egyptians. Consequently, there is now the Alexandrian liturgy, which embodies many Coptic and Ethiopian customs. The same thing happened when St. Peter went to Antioch to preach the word. He had to use the language, gestures and ceremonial practices of the pagans that they might receive him and he might give them Christ in return. The Church does not intend to unify her various Rites which form the Mystical Body of Christ. Is the Church willing to see a member of that Body disappear? Which member will it be? As a whole the Church wants the UNITY but not the UNIFORMITY of her Rites. The notion of unifying the Rites for the advantage of the Church is false and devaluates the real meaning and importance of unity in doctrine and, consequently, in obedience to the Holy Father.

## AS VISIBLE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, IS THE HOLY FATHER INTERESTED IN PRESERVING THE DIFFERENT RITES?

The first Canon of the Law on Persons, which Pius XII approved and published, states: "The Eastern Rites, whose venerable antiquity is an illustrious ornament to the entire Church as well as an affirmation of the divine unity of the Catholic Faith, shall religiously be preserved . . . All clerics and religious shall not dare to give suggestion or advice to the clergy or the faithful of another Rite which could lead to contempt or lessening of respect for the laudable institutions of their Rite". (CIC, c. 98.) Canon 7 of the Law on Persons says: "No one shall presume to induce in any manner anyone from among the faithful to join another Rite". Therefore, any active or passive proselytism which would induce Catholics to request a change of their Rite is forbidden and sinful. Priests of other Rites have the duty to persuade the faithful to obey the Laws of the Church.

## AS HEAD OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, DID THE HOLY FATHER DO ANYTHING TO PROMOTE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE EASTERN RITES?

In January, 1935, Pope Pius XI launched an appeal through the Sacred Congregation for Seminaries asking the Catholic schools,



seminaries and universities to observe an Annual Eastern Rites Day. On that day, these institutions were to provide their students with competent experts on Eastern Rites to lecture to them, and with an Oriental divine liturgy to be celebrated for the purpose of acquainting Catholics of the Latin Rite with the beautiful diversity, yet unity, of the liturgical life in the Church. There is no information, however, as to what extent this Decree was carried out.

#### HAS THE MARONITE RITE EVER BEEN SEPARATED FROM ROME?

The Maronites have always kept their allegiance to the See of Peter. Some doctrinal errors, however, were interpolated in their manuscripts. Some scribes made errors inadvertently because they were unaware of the theological dissensions of that time. The Maronite Rite is the only Rite which has not and never had religious division within its ranks. More than 64 Popes have testified to the loyalty of the Maronites to Rome and their faith in the Universal Church. The so-called "conversion" of the Maronites is nothing but the resumption of their communications with the Holy See of Rome, which were severed by the Arab invasion and domination, and the adoption of some Western customs. As a matter of fact, every delegate to Lebanon was proud to return to Europe and report that he converted the Maronites. If someone admits and believes that, he must also admit that the Maronites have been converted six or seven times — according to every delegate's report — always without any Maronite group or individual protesting or dissenting from the whole Maronite Church and Nation. Is this possible?

#### IS EVERYBODY FREE TO CHOOSE HIS OWN RITE?

Only converts to the Church may freely choose to belong to a particular Rite. As for members of the Eastern and Western Rites, they should keep their own. VaticanII's Decree on the Oriental Churches stated: "All Eastern Rite members should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their lawful liturgical Rites and their established ways of life, and that these should not be altered except by way of an appropriate and organic development. Easterners themselves should honour all these things with the greatest fidelity. Besides, they should acquire an ever greater knowledge and a more exact use of them. IF THEY HAVE IMPROPERLY FALLEN AWAY FROM THEM because of circumstances of time or personage, let them take pains to return to their ancestral ways".

of faith, the virgin Mary, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, has undone by her faith". And contrasting Mary with Eve, they would call Mary "Mother of the living" and coin the phrase, "Life through Mary, death through Eve".

The Holy Spirit came upon her and Mary conceived Christ. Under the influence of the Spirit she will be closely associated with the Son of God in the plan of salvation and, like a new Eve, she will be for redeemed mankind the example and the model of faith, of charity and of perfect union with Christ her son and her God. Overshadowed by the Holy Spirit she is led to put herself completely at the disposal of the Father in the mystery of the redemption of the human race.

It was through the Holy Spirit who was the source of her faith and obedience that Mary conceived the Son of the eternal Father, her firstborn among many brethren, that is, among us who believe, over whom she watches with a mother's love.

Having stated this doctrine which will be the chief feature of what is to follow, we now pass on to analyse the four truths which are the object of this paper. Mary is Mother of God, she is Ever Virgin, she was conceived immaculate and she was assumed into heaven.

#### 1. MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

The Eternal Father has called Mary to share in giving a human nature to his only-begotten Son. The Son has chosen Mary to become His Mother and to be the Ladder he will use to come down from heaven. The Holy Spirit has chosen her to become His beloved spouse, the sealed garden (as the Song of Songs has it) rich in flowers of purity and charity.

The East has always striven to uphold this title "Mother of God" "Theotokos" not "Christotokos", that is, "Mother of God" and not "Mother of Christ", or if you wish, "Mother of Christ-who-is-God". And when Nestorius wanted to deprive Mary of this title, the source of her immaculate purity, all the Eastern Churches spoke through the mouth of Cyril of Alexandria. He, with the consent of Pope Celestine, presided over the Council of Ephesus in 431 which condemned Nestorius and his followers and taught clearly and with authority the divine Motherhood of Mary. From that day to this, people have prayed enthusiastically to the Mother of God, to Mary who has not simply been a tabernacle for the Son of God, but in the strict sense, Mother of Him who became incarnate in her, who took



THE VIRGIN MARY IN EASTERN THEOLOGY  
BY HIS GRACE ABDO KHALIFE  
MARONITE ARCHBISHOP OF AUSTRALIA

Eastern theology treats of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the sublime title of "Mother of God". After a long struggle against heretics who denied the dogma of the Divine Motherhood, the Council of Ephesus (431) defined the faith of the Church of the early centuries by calling Mary, "The Mother of Christ-who-is-God" or quite simply, "Mother of God". This is the faith that has been passed on from generation to generation.

So it is not surprising that Eastern Christianity has always held firmly to this title "Mother of God" and to what it signifies: that it has always implored the indispensable help of the Mother of God in both spiritual and temporal affairs; and that in the East the precious blood of a great number of martyrs has been sacrificed to defend this very dogma.

The intention of this paper is to show the various characteristics of Eastern Mariology by stressing the unparalleled role that the Virgin Mary plays in the life of an Eastern Rite Catholic.

The Holy Spirit dominates all the theological thinking of the East, so naturally he dominates Eastern Mariology. The II Vatican Council was certainly influenced and enriched by the Eastern Fathers of the Church, particularly by their insistence on the role of the Holy Spirit in the history of salvation from the preparation for the incarnation of the Son of God until his death and resurrection to where Christ himself becomes the "Giver of the Spirit" and a "Life-Giving Spirit".

Mary is the temple of the Holy Spirit — moulded by him, and formed by him into a new creature. The Spirit makes her full of grace from the first moment of her conception, she becomes the perfect woman, the Mother of Him who is to come, the Redeemer. By the Holy Spirit Mary was destined to become day by day, a soul full of longing, one of the poor of Israel, who waited with confidence and righteousness for salvation.

St. Irenaeus could say that by the Holy Spirit Mary has become both for herself and for all mankind the cause of salvation. Like him, others were to say: "The knot of Eve's disobedience has been untied by Mary's obedience" — "what the virgin Eve has done by her lack

WHAT AM I IF MY FATHER WAS A MARONITE AND I WAS BAPTISED IN THE LATIN CHURCH ACCORDING TO THE LATIN RITE?

A child retains the Rite of his father no matter where and by whom he is baptised. The law of the Catholic Church is very clear on that point. Without exception, Canon 98, CIC, and Canon 8, par. 1, of the *Motu Proprio Cleri Sanctitati* for the Eastern Churches state: "A child who receives Baptism belongs to the Rite predetermined by law, irrespective of the Rite of the minister of the ceremonies".

IS MY LATIN BAPTISM VALID?

Baptism is always valid no matter who the minister is as long as the essential conditions for its validity are observed. The question is not concerned with its VALIDITY, but with its LAWFULNESS. To be lawful, the Baptism must be administered by a priest of the Rite, if he is available, or with his consent. Canon Law states: "If the Baptism was administered by a minister of another Rite, in case of GRAVE NECESSITY when a priest of the proper Rite could not be present, or because of some just reason with the permission of the proper Hierarchy, or because of fraud, the person thus baptised shall be regarded as belonging to that Rite, according to the ceremonies of which he OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN BAPTISED (Canon 98 CIC, and 6 par. 2, of *Cleri Sanctitati*, Pospishil, pg. 27). It is up to the priest, therefore, to instruct and remind the faithful of their obligations".

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MARONITE PARENTS AND CHILDREN HAVE ALL BEEN BAPTISED IN THE LATIN RITE?

The law is not altered in the case of succeeding generations. The Rite of the father is sustained.

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN ATTENDING PAROCHIAL LATIN SCHOOLS AND PERFORMING HIS SPIRITUAL DUTIES IN THE LATIN CHURCH?

If there is no Maronite church in the vicinity, he may attend a Latin church, BUT THIS DOES NOT CHANGE HIS RITE. The Church states that "no one can change to another Rite, or return to a former Rite after a valid transfer to another, without permission of the Apostolic See" (Canon 8 par. 1 de Personis). He may at times attend another church other than his Eastern Rite parish for practical reasons (for instance, if his children attend school there). It is clear that he must contribute to that school by paying tuition and giving



assistance when possible, but he must also remember that he has an obligation towards his parish, which is the parish of his Rite and to which he owes his allegiance and service, both spiritual and temporal.

#### I AM A MARONITE AND MY WIFE IS A LATIN. DOES HER MARRIAGE TO ME CHANGE HER RITE?

According to Canon Law (per. 9 Cleri Sanctitatu), freedom of choice is left to the bride, but she must sign a declaration regarding her choice. According to tradition and history, however, as well as to our Personal Statutes, in the Middle East (cf. Art. 26, Personal Statutes of Lebanon), and for the good of the children and unity in the family, the bride, in fact, should join the Rite of her husband at the time of the marriage. The husband is the head of the family (St. Paul). If the bride chooses NOT to join the Rite of her husband, she should declare this openly before the marriage. According to Church Laws and tradition, the children must follow the Rite of the Father. This law is still maintained, even when a dispensation has been given to have the marriage performed in a church other than the church of the bridegroom.

#### IS IT POSSIBLE TO CHANGE RITE?

Yes, it is possible to change Rite, but this requires filing a petition giving serious and valid reasons for such a change. Negligence on the part of the parents to attend the church of their Rite, and claiming ignorance of the Rite ARE NOT valid reasons for a change. Justifying oneself to be ignorant of the law is not a safe procedure to follow, and the Church cannot sanction indifference or ignorance. If someone does file a petition for a change of Rite, it will be sent to his Bishop as well as to the Bishop of the other chosen Rite for evaluation and study. The final decision will be made by the Holy See. If a Catholic finds it impossible at times to perform his spiritual duties according to his Rite, he may perform them in any Catholic church. "Defect in certain organizational situations with which sometimes Eastern Rite parishes are beset, but which can be overcome by applying Christian charity, cannot serve as valid reasons for a transfer of Rite: e.g. the fact that such a parish does not possess its own parochial school. Such children will certainly be accepted by the parochial school of another Rite without the parents being forced to change their Rite. Lack of schools is no reason for Catholics to leave their parish, since a large number of Latin Rite parishes in Australia and around the world have no parochial school of their own". Today these parochial schools are facing a serious lack of personnel and a critical financial situation.

Charbel, Croydon and Thornleigh churches.

Those who find that these centres are still far away from their homes will be able to find spiritual nourishment and consolation in latin churches.

Around the Archbishop you will find the Maronite Council, the Association of Maronite Youth, the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, the evangelical vigils, the pastoral visits. In addition, Confessions, visits to the sick, newspaper articles and conferences, particular conversations, all these activities forecast a very encouraging spring for this Diocese painfully afflicted by its difficult birth.

Members of the laity aware of their duty and participation in the Church of God will still increase in number to further the commitments of the christian apostolate of the new Diocese. As to those Maronites born here, God give us vocations themselves born in Australia; to serve them one would have to understand them and slowly but surely bring them back to their traditions and glorious customs as lived by their ancestors.

Our Lady of Lebanon parish in Melbourne is served by Msgr Paul Khoury who for 22 years has reunited and unified the Community: Youth Movement, Ladies Association, varied organizations make of this parish a living and radiant centre of apostolate. As to the Parish of Adelaide, we owe to the generosity of Archbishop James Gleeson the Church of the Resurrection. There the Maronites perform their religious duty and gather around their Pastor, Reverend Father Youssef Ndaira, who knew how to win the hearts of all.

The Maronites who are faithfully attached to their faith have always been attached to the Holy See, the Seat of Peter. They nourish in their heart a burning love to God and remain loyal to Lebanon, Faithful citizens of Australia which welcomed them generously. They have demonstrated their gratitude by keeping an impeccable record. Their long history is the history of their persecutions. They have endured it gallantly for the defence of their faith and their country. They will thus always remain valiant and proud of their faith and country. Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Sydney is a testimony of faith and hope. She is a continuation of the history of our Lady in the history of the Maronites.

+ Abdo KHALIFE

Maronite Archbishop of Australia

August 1978



completes the construction of Our Lady of Lebanon church. This new church has a fine architectural style and will become a centre of pilgrimage in Australia. The Architect together with the Engineer and the Italian Artist Ernesto Lamagna had worked with heart and finesse. The Builder, Louis Wehbe, has given the best of himself.

The relationship between Maronite and Roman Catholics has always been good. Latin priests have always given great services to the Maronites, they have adopted them spiritually, and given the best of themselves. The Maronites, ever generous, have assisted materially in the building of latin churches.

The Cardinals Archbishops of Sydney (the late Eminence Norman Th. Gilleroy) and His Eminence Sir James Freeman together with his Bishops have always looked upon the Maronites with affection and love.

In an endeavour to organize his Diocese the maronite Archbishop launched a call to many priests. Those who have hitherto responded to the call are Reverend Fathers Nakhle Akiki, Youssef Touma, Antoun Chalhoub, Michel Bou-Melhem.

Guided by Fathers Chalhoub and Bou-Melhem and supported by the Archbishop, the 200 maronite families of Croydon-Burwood and surrounds have pooled their resources and raised sufficient money to offer the maronite Diocese a church building which will enable them to assemble and relive in a communal spirit their christian customs and traditions. Thus soon the Maronite Diocese in Australia will have in Sydney to date five spiritual centres: The Cathedral in Redfern; Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Harris Park; Thornleigh; Croydon and Punchbowl (Maronite Lebanese Order).

Qualifying the Thornleigh centre it should be noted that the Maronite Community of Bane has arranged with the Parish Priest of Thornleigh the use of the latin church for their own parochial activities. They assemble there in great number with faith and intense faithfulness to their maronite traditions.

As to Croydon, the Church which will be adapted to the religious and spiritual work will soon welcome the Maronite faithfuls.

Finally the Church of Saint Charbel, built three years ago will serve the Community in a significant way through the intercession of the new Lebanese Saint.

All the Maronites will assemble under the protection of Our Lady of Lebanon, Saint Maron, Patron of the Maronite Community, St.

"Among the reasons on account of which transfer to another Rite is usually granted, the return to the Rite of one's ancestors is eminent" (Canon 8, par. 2 Pospishil, pg. 36). The Holy See, according to its Decrees, wishes everyone to retain and cherish his Rite. The Church has often been accused of desiring the unity of all Christians only to absorb them into the Latin Rite. Catholics who do not fulfill the desires and intentions of the Church confirm such accusations.

#### CAN MY CHILD BE BAPTISED IN A LATIN CHURCH?

Yes, if there is no Maronite parish in the vicinity. If there is a Maronite parish in the area, however, permission should be obtained, either by you or the Latin pastor from the Maronite pastor, for Baptism in the Latin church. The Baptism of the child should never be delayed.

#### AM I FREE TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS IN THE LATIN RITE?

You are free to receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist, and you may attend Mass in a Latin church to fulfill your Sunday obligation. However, it is the wish of the Holy See, the general laws of the Church, and the Councils that persons should receive the Sacraments in their own parishes. One's own parish is, of course, the church community with which Catholics are and should be most familiar. It is there that they gather as a church family united with their Rite and with the Universal Church through the Diocese and the See of Peter in Rome. Therefore, all Maronites should attend Mass and receive the Sacraments in a Maronite parish, provided a Maronite priest and church are available. Church Law emphasises this point in Canon 2 of the Law of Persons by stating: "WHERE THERE ARE SEVERAL RITES, THE FAITHFUL SHALL BE ADVISED OFTEN TO FREQUENT CHURCHES OF THEIR OWN RITE, ESPECIALLY ON SUNDAYS AND HOLYDAYS, AND THEY SHALL NOT NEGLECT TO ASSIST AT THE DIVINE SERVICES".

#### HOW ACCESSIBLE SHOULD THE MARONITE CHURCH BE WITH REGARD TO DISTANCE?

This is a matter of conscience. The Maronite Church may be a mile, or ten or even a hundred miles away from your home. The question is, to what degree do you recognise your obligation to worship in a Maronite church and to fulfill the laws of the Church and the wishes of the Holy See? This may cause some inconvenience, but how much of an inconvenience could it be in this day of speedy transportation? If it is impossible to attend a Maronite church regularly, at least register in the parish and attend when you can.



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND RELIGION ARE MEANS OF SALVATION AND THEY ARE NOT BASED ON CONVENIENCE BUT RATHER ON SACRIFICE. If you neglect sacrifice, you have failed to understand the teachings of Christ about this matter.

#### WHERE MUST THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE BE PERFORMED?

The Sacrament of marriage must be performed in a person's own parish. For example, if the groom is Maronite and the bride is either Latin or Catholic of any other Rite, this couple should be married in the Maronite Church of the groom and by his pastor because the Oriental Canon Law demands that the marriage be performed in the groom's parish. However, if the bride and the groom are both Latin and they wish to be married before a Maronite priest, they must obtain permission from their Latin pastor for the marriage to be *valid*, and a dispensation from the Latin Bishop for the marriage to be lawful. This is necessary because their marriage will be performed in the Maronite Rite, *which is different from their own ritual ceremony*. This is the reason for recourse to the Bishop. The same must be said if two maronites, bride and groom, want to be married according to the Latin Rite, in a Latin church, and by a Latin priest. This dispensation is granted only for the marriage ceremony. After the marriage ceremony, the couple must keep their own Rite. Should the marriage take place in the bride's church instead of the groom's, permission should be obtained first from the groom's pastor and then from the Bishop, who will in turn dispense from the ceremonies to be performed in the Rite of the groom. If a maronite wants to marry a non-catholic or a non-christian, no one has jurisdiction other than the maronite pastor and Bishop. Where there is no maronite church in the area, the latin pastor will contact the maronite Chancery Office for the proper dispensations.

#### WHY ARE MARRIAGE LAWS BETWEEN PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT RITES SO COMPLICATED?

Considering the sanctity and the importance of marriage, the Church wants each and every Catholic to keep his or her own Rite and respect its sacred laws. The protection and sanctification of this union is foremost in the mind of the Church.

#### CAN A MARONITE PASTOR DELEGATE A LATIN PRIEST TO PERFORM THE WEDDING CEREMONIES OF A MARONITE GROOM AND A MARONITE BRIDE?

Yes, he can, and their marriage will be *valid*. For *lawfulness*,

number after the Second World War and in droves after the two year war of Lebanon.

Australia, a welcoming and humanitarian country, opened its doors to the refugees of Lebanon. Lebanon, ironically, has always been in the past a refuge of liberty and of the persecuted.

Since 1898 Maronite priests served the small maronite Community. After Fathers Dahdah and Yazbec came Monsignor Assaf who stayed in Australia until the arrival of Father Chucrallah Harb (the current Archbishop of Jounieh in Lebanon). In the meantime Msgr Paul Khoury was fully extended serving the Lebanese in Victoria, offering them upon their arrival from Lebanon food and shelter, thus establishing the basis of the future maronite Community of Melbourne.

Msgr Peter Ziade succeeded Father Harb in Sydney. He undertook the construction of the big St. Maron's Church in Redfern and laid the foundation of Our Lady of Lebanon church in Harris Park. He also organized the arrival in Australia of the Maronite Holy Family nuns who were given the necessary responsibilities for the conduct of two primary schools for children of Maronite families in Sydney.

The maronite population was increasing daily.

In the last ten years it reached 120,000 approximately. The majority live in Sydney, 7,000 live in Melbourne, 3,000 in Adelaide, 1,500 in Brisbane and a fair number is scattered throughout the wide regions of this vast continent.

Noticing the quick increase and development of the maronite Community, Rome understood the necessity to establish a Diocese and appointed a Bishop to organize and lead the Maronites in their parishes where they seek spiritual food and moral support to relive unhindered in Australia their great maronite traditions and customs.

The first Archbishop-Bishop, Abdo Khalife, was appointed directly by the Holy Father on 13/7/1973. He was installed in Sydney on 13/10/1973. Upon his arrival he was accompanied by one priest only, Father Ad Abi Karam who was on loan from his Bishop Msgr Elie Farah, Archbishop of Cyprus in Lebanon and his Shammas Joseph Saïba. There was in Sydney three Monks of the Maronite Lebanese Order who were offering their spiritual assistance to the members of the great maronite Community scattered around Sydney: Fathers Boulos Ziade, Antoine Merheb, Youssef Boutros.

The new Bishop had to face the organisational tasks of his Diocese. He creates two parishes in Melbourne and Adelaide (Father Youssef Ndairat). He creates a parish in Sydney with two churches; St. Maron's Cathedral and Our Lady of Lebanon church. He



3. They numbered great scholars, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

4. In many respects, they formed the mount of Lebanon as a country and as a state. It was, also, the Maronite Patriarch Elias El-Hoyek who appeared as the Peace Conference in 1919 and obtained the official independence of Lebanon and the restoration of its historical and natural boundaries.

#### NAMES AND ROLES OF SOME PROMINENT MARONITE SCHOLARS AND WRITERS:

1. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a distinguished group of Maronite scholars and writers held prominent offices as professors of Oriental languages, literature and history at the universities of Rome, Padua, Florence, etc. Gabriel Sionita and Abraham Echellensis, whose names are still engraved on the frontispiece of the "College de France", are but two of them.

2. Some others were custodians of royal and state libraries in France, Italy, and Spain. Joseph Simon Assemani was the custodian of the Vatican library itself in the eighteenth century.

3. The works of these scholars, among them the Assemanis, introduced into Europe the oriental studies and the history of the Eastern Churches.

4. At the same time, eminent services were rendered to the cultural and literary revival in Lebanon and the Near East, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Patriarch Stephen El-Dounaihy and Bishops Germanos Farhat, Joseph Derian and Stephen Assemani were some of the members of the clergy whose activity was accompanied by that of lay scholars such as Boutros El-Boustany and Fares Es-Shidiac, and Kahil Gibran.

#### A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE MARONITE MIGRATION IN AUSTRALIA

Documented evidence supporting the precise details of Maronite Migration in Australia is not available. However I shall invite attention of the reader upon a few points which characterized the arrival of the Maronites on this hospitable and welcoming land.

It appeared that migration began in 1854. A man from the Fakhyr family of Becharreh landed in Adelaide. Then village after village saw some of their sons leave in small number; in greater number during the period following the First World War; in still greater

however, the maronite pastor must obtain for the latin priest a dispensation from the maronite Bishop because the ceremonies should be performed according to the Rite of the maronite bride and groom.

#### ARE THERE SPECIAL REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE BURIAL OF A MARONITE?

If the deceased is a Maronite, his family must bury him according to the Maronite Rite and services, assuming there is a Maronite church in the vicinity. It is truly sad to see some Maronites, who never attended services in their church and never fulfilled their obligations towards their parish, brought in only for the Requiem Mass and services.

#### WHAT ABOUT MY PRESENT LATIN RITE AFFILIATION?

You have an obligation IN CONSCIENCE to register in a Maronite parish, provided there is one located in your city. If you neglect to do so, you are ignoring the wishes of the Holy Father and violating the laws of the Church and the Councils. Violations may occur when one is ignorant of the law; but once you are familiar with the law, you are bound in conscience to obey it. If you do not understand the law, or feel that attending a Maronite church is too much of an inconvenience, discuss it with your Maronite pastor. He will be happy to explain this matter to you and advise you properly.

#### WHAT DOES THE DECREE OF THE EASTERN CHURCHES OF VATICAN II URGE IN PARTICULAR?

The Decree urges: "... that attention should everywhere be given to the preservation and the growth of each individual Church" (Art. 4). In Lebanon, a land of religious freedom, many Catholic Rites (Maronite, Melkite, Syrian, Armenian, Chaldean, Latin) have their own Dioceses, Bishops and Institutions and have for centuries co-existed in full harmony with the Orthodox, Protestants, Moslems and Jews.

#### ARE THE MARONITES "ROMAN CATHOLIC"?

The word "Roman" may mean either a liturgy or a good relationship with and obedience to the Holy Father. If it is meant as a "liturgy", the Maronites have their own Maronite liturgy, just as the Latins have their own. If it is meant as "obedience" to the Holy Father the Maronites were and are "Roman" since the time of St. Peter. In fact, they shed their blood and suffered terrible persecutions for many centuries to keep their Catholic faith and allegiance to the



Holy Sec. St. Peter was the Bishop of Antioch (the Patriarchal See of the Maronites) even before moving to Rome and becoming its Bishop.

#### ARE THE MARONITE RITE AND LITURGY UNIVERSAL?

According to the laws of the Catholic Church, all Rites are universal, and cannot be national. In fact, the Maronites in the 10-12th centuries were spread all over the Middle East: Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Iraq (we had an Archbishop there), Egypt, Cyprus, and even Malta. Today, almost the same Maronite liturgy can be found among the Malankarese of India, who together with the Malabarese are called the disciples of St. Thomas, the Apostle. Maronites should remember that Antioch was a great missionary centre, but the political situation and the ignominious persecutions did not allow them to expand. They once had 60,000-80,000 Maronites in Cyprus, but now only 4,000-5,000 remain because many were massacred or fled to other countries.

#### WHY ARE ALL MARONITES LEBANESE OR OF LEBANESE DESCENT?

Not all Maronites are Lebanese because there are Syrian, Egyptian, Palestinian (Jordan), Italian, Brazilian, Australian, French, American and Canadian Maronites spread all over the world. However, in the United States, Australia and in other countries, the majority of Maronites are of Lebanese descent.

#### WHY ARE THEY ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY OF LEBANESE DESCENT?

The Maronites, from their origin, had to face persecutions and seek a safe place to live together freely in the mountains of Lebanon. Lebanon has always been their sacred refuge and the emblem of freedom and Catholicism for centuries, and she is still a land of religious freedom and a shelter for persecuted people of all religions. Some Maronites did not flee to Lebanon but remained in Syria, Cyprus, Palestine and Egypt, and kept their Catholic faith intact and immaculate despite hardships and persecutions.

#### WHY DO THE MARONITES TALK ABOUT THE CEDAR OF LEBANON?

The Maronites talk about the Cedar of Lebanon because they consider the Cedar as the real symbol of Lebanon, where their Patriarch, Bishops, Priests, Monks and Nuns were able to live and progress for centuries, in poverty yet in freedom. Their Patriarch

He came to the world by miracle in a wonderful way,  
In the union of the two natures truly,  
Having one person. He had one will twofold,  
With the properties of the two nature undivided,  
The natures remain in one person divinely.  
Recognized without disunion, nor confusion.  
By the divine nature, He wrought the miracles divinely,  
By the human nature, He endured sufferings humanly.  
Paul said, He was made similar to us entirely.  
Except sin, impiety and iniquity".

\* Cited in Paul Abraham, *The Maronites of Lebanon* (Wheeling, W. Va.: Our Lady of Lebanon Church, 1931), p. 63.

#### THEIR HISTORY

#### HOW CAN THE HISTORY OF THE MARONITES BE CHARACTERIZED?

It is a history of ceaseless struggle to defend the Catholic faith and religious freedom.

#### WHAT ARE THE MAIN ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS STRUGGLE?

1. Martyrdom since the origins.
2. Flight to Lebanon during the seventh and eighth centuries because of persecutions.
3. Great help offered to the Crusaders in the eleventh century.
4. Entrenchment on the Lebanese mountains and dwelling in caves and valleys for protection from persecutions. It is interesting to note, though, that civil and religious autonomy was granted to the Maronites. Their Patriarch, for instance, did not need any "firman", or investiture from the Ottoman Sultan.

#### WHAT ARE SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF A BRIGHTER ASPECT OF THIS HISTORY?

1. Beside the help the Maronites offered the Crusaders and their staunch attachment to the Catholic faith despite all hardships, they had saintly patriarchs and exemplary monks and hermits.
2. They gave refuge to several Oriental Communities and played an active role in their return to the Catholic Church. Moreover, the religious Orders of these communities adopted or borrowed from the Constitutions of their Orders.



place in the eighth century between the Maronites and some who were preaching the doctrine of the two wills; misunderstanding insofar as the presentation of the doctrine and its consequences were concerned, not the substance itself of the doctrine. This misunderstanding was interpreted as Monothelism and spread in the East and West by authors who were inaccurate or copied from one another. The Bull of Innocent III, overemphasized as it has been, and even misinterpreted, contributed to give a more solid ground and a more official basis to a so-called Maronite Monothelism.

Thus was born, as one writer said, developed and incorporated into history and legend of the Maronite Monothelism!

#### ARE THERE ANY OTHER DOCUMENTS OR FACTS WHICH SHOW THE FIDELITY OF THE MARONITES TO THE HOLY SEE?

There are plenty.

1. The relations between the Maronites and the Holy See are secular. Documents go back as far as the year 517. Some Popes sent the Maronites their blessings, others granted the "pallium"\* to their Patriarchs. The Maronite Patriarchs were in touch with the Holy See every time they could, and, for this, they, themselves, or at least their delegations went to sea facing dangers and pirates!

2. Many papal documents praise the Maronites for their staunch attachment to the Holy See, describing them as "roses among thorns", or "a most firm rock in the midst of the sea, placed against so many raging wars of heretics, schismatics and infidels troubling the Patriarchate of Antioch", or having "always been, formerly and are today entirely and intensely Catholic, united by strong bands to the Holy See", etc., etc.

3. If it is true that the infallibility of the Popes is not involved in such documents, one wonders, nevertheless, why so many Popes praised so highly and insisted so much on the unbroken fidelity of the Maronites to the Holy See, even when nothing was calling for such attitude!

\* A circular white wool band with pendants, worn over the shoulders, given by the Pope to a Patriarch in recognition of his legitimate authority.

#### HYMN IN THE OLD MARONITE MASS\*

"The merciful who in Mary dwelt in poverty,  
And as man went out of her womb humbly,

and Bishops, and later on the Patriarchs and Bishops of other Eastern Rites, had and still have their episcopal Sees in Lebanon. The Cedar tree has always been the symbol of freedom for all faiths in Lebanon. The title "Cedar of Lebanon" is given to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and the Maronites invoke her as such in her Litany. The Bible mentions the "Cedar of Lebanon" in many places as the symbol of the Immaculate Conception and the Saints. Cedar wood is the symbol of immortality because of its lasting wood and evergreen colour. It was used extensively in the palaces of kings, such as David and Solomon, and especially in the first and second temples of Jerusalem (3 Kings, 5).

#### ARE THE REGULATIONS ON FAST AND ABSTINENCE THE SAME FOR MARONITES AND LATIN?

FAST: Fasting has been reduced now to only two days: the first day of Lent and Good Friday. On these two days, Maronites must fast and abstain. In the Maronite Rite and all Eastern Rites, Lent begins two days before the Latin Lent, namely on MONDAY, not on ASH WEDNESDAY.

ABSTINENCE: Abstinance has also been reduced to all Fridays of Lent for both Maronites and Latins. Regarding all other Fridays of the year, they are encouraged to keep the old tradition of Abstinance. Penance is necessary for salvation and its door is still wide open to all.

1. Fast in the Maronite Rite, like in other Rites, is of two kinds:

A. The Eucharistic fast required before receiving Communion follows the same regulations as in other Rites.

B. The lenten fast consists in refraining from eating any food or drinking any liquid, except water, from midnight to noontime. There are no complete or incomplete meals as in the Latin Rite, and between noontime and midnight one may eat as much or as often as one wants.

2. Abstinance consists in abstaining from meat and dairy products from midnight to midnight. But, at the present time, dispensation has been given for the dairy products and abstinance now consists practically in abstaining only from meat. There is no complete or incomplete abstinance; all abstinance in the Maronite Rite is complete.

3. Days of fast and abstinance and dispensation:



A. Fast and abstinence together:

1. Ash Monday.
2. Good Friday.

B. Abstinence only:

1. Christmas Vigil.
2. Assumption Vigil.
3. Every Friday except: (for his who wants to keep the old tradition of abstinence)
  - a. that on which falls a Holy Day of Obligation.
  - b. that preceding Ash Monday.
  - c. those between Christmas and Epiphany.
  - d. those between Easter and Pentecost.

DO THE MARONITES HAVE THEIR SPECIAL HOLYDAYS OF OBLIGATION?

Yes, but here in Australia they have been reduced to the same holidays recognised and approved by the Latin Hierarchy for the sake of convenience and simplification. The Maronites have other feasts, such as St. Maron, St. John Maron, Sis. Peter and Paul, The Holy Cross, Our Lady of Lebanon, Our Lady of the Fields, and many others. Pastors usually announce these feasts as they do Feast of St. Maron. In view of the evening Masses now, the Maronite Hierarchy recommends attendance at Mass, if possible, on these feast days.

THE MARONITE HOLYDAYS OF OBLIGATION ARE:

All Sundays; All Saints Day, Nov. 1; Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8; Circumcision, Jan. 1; Ascension Day; Assumption, Aug. 15; Christmas, Dec. 25.

ARE MARONITES OBLIGED TO KEEP THEIR RITE?

Yes. Maronites are obliged, *in conscience*, to keep and preserve their Rite to the best of their ability. They should hand down their traditions and liturgy to their children. This is evident from the documents of Vatican II, which say that Catholics are to "keep, support, promote and preserve their Rite and help it grow and expand". Maronites, therefore, should worship in their own Maronite churches and support them according to their means.

"that in Christ were two wills separate and opposed to each other, even hostile the one to the other". The Catholic doctrine, indeed, does not teach two conflicting wills in Christ.

b. The preceding text then, together with other invoked texts, shows that the Maronites were not aware of the Sixth Council which proclaimed the true doctrine of the two wills. This doctrine, as a matter of fact, was not yet promulgated in Syria. And yet, this did not hinder the Maronites from recognizing in Christ a "two-fold" will, as it appears from the hymn cited below. That is to say that beyond the words used, they meant the moral unity of the two wills, since in Christ there was no will to sin. That is what Pope Honorius said, and he said it the same way!

c. As a matter of fact and as it appears from other invoked documents, the Maronites will not know the doctrine of the Sixth Council in its official form before their contacts with the Crusaders, that is the eleventh century. In the meantime they had fled to Lebanon where they retrenched for centuries. As soon as the Crusaders presented to them the official doctrine they hastened to take it as it was, for it was presented to them as the doctrine of the Roman Church. They already had the substance of it at least, but they wholeheartedly adopted what Rome was teaching them. That is how, some writers spoke of the conversion of the Maronites at the eleventh century!

d. Those writers moreover invoked a Bull sent by Pope Innocentius III in 1215 to Jeremiah, the Maronite Patriarch, and his community. They understood it as requiring an abjuration of heresy and made a big issue out of it. But the text shows that what was required was a pure oath of fidelity to the Holy Sec. By no means was an abjuration required nor was this oath itself something new, or unusual, or particular to the Maronites. Actually, the Bull intended the Greeks at the same time, insisting on the question of the procession of the Holy Ghost not on Monothelism. Furthermore, and this is important, the Pope recognizes the legitimacy of the power of the Maronite Patriarchs who preceded Jeremiah. He goes even as far as "renewing" the "usual prerogatives" to Jeremiah and his successors without introducing any limitation or restriction!

SUMMARY:

Now we can see how things evolved. A misunderstanding took



historical events are invoked to prove these positions or other ones, accusing the Maronites of Monothelism before the twelfth century; that is, when they received the Crusaders who taught them the Catholic doctrine of the two wills of Christ.

1. Number of historians already answered these contentions by stating that the Maronites never were Monothelites and, if there were some defections, they were simply individual errors not necessarily meant as such.

2. The Maronite Church has such origins which are in complete contradiction with any Monothelitic foundation:

A. No historian, for instance, has yet maintained that the first Maronite Patriarch was a Monothelite or ever became Monothelite.

B. The Maronite Church and even its patriarchate were established before Monothelism was introduced into Syria. As a matter of fact, Monothelism was not known in Syria before the year 727, more than one century after it spread in Byzantium.

3. The Fathers of the Sixth Council held against Monothelism and the other Councils of the seventh century never mentioned the Maronites among those whom they condemned. There was no reluctance to condemning heretics, though, or listing their names!

4. As for the texts invoked, we can make the following remarks:

A. The texts written by Maronites either indicate individual defects or are to be interpreted in their literary, historical, social and religious context. We shall see below how the Maronites understood the doctrine of the two wills.

B. The texts written by other than Maronites have been proved inaccurate or copied from erroneous sources. Actually, a first document happened to be inaccurate and all the other documents shared in the same inaccuracy, for their information was drawn from it.

a. This first document is the testimony of Denys Tell-Mahree who mentions how the Maronites did not admit the doctrine of the two wills. Besides being an information given by a Jacobite (Denys was the Patriarch of the Jacobites), this text did not reach us directly, but through another Jacobite Patriarch and historian, Michel the Syrian. Michel wrote about three centuries after Denys and was not always historically accurate. Actually, what is interesting is that the text itself shows rather the Catholicity of the Maronites. It tells us that they were opposing the doctrine of the two wills as it was proposed to them; they were arguing against an opinion which would lead to admit

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A MEMBER OF MY FAMILY WISHES TO BECOME A MARONITE PRIEST OR NUN?

You should call on your pastor, who will advise the Maronite Archbishop.

IS IT WRONG FOR A MARONITE TO BE INDIFFERENT ABOUT HIS RITE?

Yes, it is wrong, because in doing so he is despising and defying the sacred laws of the Church and is not fulfilling his obligation. He is at least guilty of the sin of omission before God and the Church, and he is ignoring the fact that his forefathers sacrificed their lives that he might be a Christian and a Catholic today.

WHAT ABOUT A MARONITE WHO IGNORES HIS RITE OR THE OBLIGATION OF RETAINING IT?

Ignorance has never been a good excuse, and whoever is in the darkness must seek the light. Whoever ignores a law is bound to free himself from his ignorance by seeking information and advice. The will to abide in ignorance is a sin.

AREN'T THE MARONITES SEGREGATING THEMSELVES FROM SOCIETY BY SO DOING?

The Maronites would be facing this problem even if they were Latins, Byzantines, Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, Jews or Moslems. The union with God is that with mankind, and the love of God is that of our neighbour. Maronites should practice the principles and truth of their religion to the best of their ability, and be efficient members of society to the utmost of their capacities. Is the family the enemy of society, or its very foundation? Everyone should have the courage to exhibit his beliefs to society and put them at the service of mankind, because this is the mission of every religious group.

DO THE MARONITES HAVE A SPECIAL MISSION IN THE CHURCH?

Their presence in the Catholic Church testifies to her spiritual wealth, greatness and freedom to worship in unity with the many different Rites within her. The uninterrupted chain of Maronite martyrs and saints, such as St. Maron, Blessed Sharbel, Hardini, the Massabki Brothers, Rafka and James of Ghazir, proves the vitality of the Maronite Rite, which continues to represent within the Church a special aspect of theology, liturgy and spirituality prior to the Hellenisation and Latinisation of the Church.



The Churches of the West, as well as the Churches of the East have kept intact the same apostolic truths, sacraments and devotions. This proves beyond doubt their loyalty and faithfulness to the Holy Gospel and to the ministry of the Word. In fact, this is what Vatican II says about it: "For many centuries the Churches of the East and the West went their way, though a brotherly communion of faith and sacramental life bound them together." (Decree on Ecumenism, III, 14.)

*and also:* "... therefore, Catholics are strongly urged to avail themselves more often of these spiritual riches of the Eastern Fathers, riches which lift up the whole man to the contemplation of divine mysteries. All should realise that it is of supreme importance to understand, venerate, preserve and foster the exceedingly rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches in order to faithfully preserve the fullness of Christian tradition and to bring about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians". (Decree on Ecumenism, III, 15.)

*and also:* "While thanking God that many Eastern sons of the Catholic Church, who are preserving this heritage and wish to express it more faithfully and completely in their lives, are already living in full communion with their brethren who follow the tradition of the West, this sacred Synod declares that this entire heritage of spirituality and liturgy, of discipline and theology, in their various traditions, belongs to the full catholic and apostolic character of the Church". (Decree on Ecumenism, III, 17.)

*Finally,* the Council, speaking of our Orthodox brethren: "... if this task is carried on wholeheartedly, this Sacred Synod hopes that with the removal of the wall dividing the Eastern and Western Church there may at last be but the one dwelling, firmly established on the cornerstone, Christ Jesus, who will make both ONE". (Decree on Ecumenism, III, 18.)

#### *Their duty to work for unity:*

This is how Maronites work for unity: "The Eastern Churches in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome have a special role to play in promoting the unity of all Christians, particularly Easterners, according to the principles of this Sacred Synod's Decree on Ecumenism: first of all by prayer, then by the example of their lives, by religious fidelity to ancient Eastern traditions, by greater mutual knowledge, by collaboration, and by a brotherly regard for objects and attitudes". (Decree on Eastern Churches, 24.)

proclaimed the two natures in Christ. The letter sent by the Maronite monks to Pope Hormisdas in the year 517 was but an appeal to the Holy See because of the persecutions they were suffering.

B. A Syriac document (kept in the British Museum, addition 12-155) going back to the end of the sixth century shows the Maronite leading the Catholic party and tells about a conference held at Antioch, shortly after the year 591, between the Maronite monks and the Jacobites or Monophysites. Letters were exchanged and even insults were addressed by the Jacobites to the Maronites because they held to the doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon and of Pope Leo.

C. Another conference took place in the year 659 in presence of Moawia, the Ommayyad Caliph, between the Maronites and Theodore, the Jacobite Patriarch, and Sabocht, the Jacobite Bishop of Kenesrin. (See Syriac document kept in the British Museum, addition 17216, Vol. 1-15.)

D. The Jacobite writers such as Habib-Abou-Raïta, Metropolit of Tagrit (9th century) or Bar-Hebraeus (13th century) distinguish between the Maronites called also Chalcedonians and the Monophysites or Jacobites. Bar-Hebraeus wrote, for instance, that the history of Theophile of Edessa, the Maronite, was eloquent although written against the Jacobites.

#### CONCLUSION:

Such documents and proofs lead to the conclusion that it is unjust to accuse the Maronites of any Monophysitism and that the so-called Maronites' Monophysitism is but sheer illusion. This fact has been proved and nowadays historians recognize that the Maronites never were and never could have been Monophysites. Some, however, are still divided on the question of Monothelism.

#### WHAT ABOUT MONOTHELITISM?

Monothelism is the heresy professing but one will in Christ, whereas the Catholic doctrine professes two wills: the divine and the human, the latter being submitted or morally united to the former and, thus, excluding any conflict between both or any inclination to sin. Some claimed that the Monothelites established the Maronite Church beside the two other churches of Syria: the Jacobite Church and the Official Church. Others were more reserved and claimed that the Maronites leaned toward the Monothelitic ideas. Texts and



#### WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER SACRAMENTS?

The other sacraments, also, must be received in one's own Rite and from one's own priest. Sometimes, however, local needs or conveniences make it hard for people to travel a long distance in order to receive them in a church of their Rite. The obligation then becomes less imposing.

#### WHAT ARE THE RULES APPLYING TO HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION, FAST AND ABSTINENCE?

1. As regards these matters, pertaining to the Rite, Maronites are ascribed to their own Rite, but the Holy See has granted them the Indult of conforming to the laws of the places.

#### THEIR UNBROKEN CATHOLICISM

#### HAVE THE MARONITES EVER BEEN CONVERTED TO ROME?

Never. Not only did the Maronites never convert because they never separated from Rome, but their fidelity to the Catholic Church and the Holy See has been unbroken all through history.

#### HOW DO SEVERAL BOOKS, ENCYCLOPAEDIAS, DICTIONARIES, CLAIM THAT THE MARONITES CONVERTED?

Unfortunately, the authors of all these works drew their information from the same erroneous sources. They based their studies on each other's wrong statements or false documents. As a matter of fact, some claimed that the Maronites were Monophysites, some others that they were Monothelites.

#### WHAT ABOUT THE MONOPHYSITISM OF THE MARONITES?

Monophysitism is the heresy professing only one nature in Christ, whereas the Catholic doctrine professes two complete natures: the human and the divine.

1. Those who accused the Maronites of Monophysitism based their claims upon some texts or some historical events which were misunderstood or misinterpreted.

2. Research showed also how the texts and the claims were in contradiction with the historical events.

3. History itself, indeed, resolves this problem.

A. The Maronite martyrs died for the Catholic faith and because of their attachment to the doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon which

By these means (Maronite traditions, liturgy, customs, synods, loyalty to the Holy See, martyrs, and religious institutions, etc.) the Church of the West might better understand the Church of the East, and the Church of the East might better understand the Church of the West and its stand on religious matters.

#### WHAT CAN A SMALL MINORITY OF MARONITES ACCOMPLISH?

Minority or not, it really doesn't matter. The Apostles were only twelve and they converted the whole world . . . The leaven is little but it leavens the whole dough. The Phoenicians were also few, but thanks to their alphabet and successful trading, they conquered the ocean and sailed to many ports. *The essential things for Maronites are their faith, unity, zeal and love for their Rite.* As for the rest, God will provide abundantly.

The Maronites are indeed few (5,000,000) but they are spread all over the world and they have churches almost everywhere. The Maronite Hierarchy is now establishing itself outside the Eastern territories. Their goal is to spread and avoid isolation and engulfment. To bring a child into the world means to assume the responsibility of taking good care of him by providing for him all the necessities of life, such as food, shelter, protection, guidance, etc. If these are the duties of parents, they are those of the whole family also. The same applies to a Rite. Those who are working for it should keep up their efforts and make sacrifices that it may continue to flourish and expand. The little seed that St. Maron once planted is becoming continuously a majestic tree. The Maronites rely on God and remember His words: "Do not be afraid little flock, for it pleased your Father to give you the Kingdom". It is of the utmost importance for Maronites to be conscious of their heritage, know their history and realise their mission in the Church.

#### HOW CAN THE MARONITES SUPPORT THEIR CHURCHES AND THE LATIN SCHOOLS WHERE THE CHILDREN ARE ENROLLED?

As Catholics, the Maronites understand their obligation to contribute to the Latin parish schools where their children are enrolled, but they should also understand their obligation to their Maronite parish and Archbishopry and to their Maronite projects.

#### WHAT CAN A MARONITE DO IF HE LIVES FAR AWAY OR DOES NOT HAVE A MARONITE PARISH IN HIS TOWN?

The Maronite Archbishop has suggested many times that this Maronite should continue to frequent the Latin church and practice



his religion there; but he should also keep his Maronite Rite and heritage, contact his fellow Maronites or the Maronite Archbishopry in Sydney for information, and attend as much as possible the Diocesan gatherings.

#### ARE THERE ANY MARONITE PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH?

There are few: The Divine Liturgy according to the Maronite Antiochian Rite; Hymns of the Maronite Church; History of the Maronite Church; The Maronite Rite, A Catechism.

#### WHAT IS THE ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER OF THE MARONITE ARCHBISHOPRY?

The address of the Maronite Diocese is: 627 Elizabeth Street, Redfern, N.S.W. 2016 — P.O. Box 91. The phone number is: (02) 698 2102.

### MARONITE LITURGY

#### WHAT IS THE MARONITE LITURGY?

The Maronite Liturgy is the original liturgy which developed at Antioch (in Aramaic) right after the time of the Apostles. This early liturgy was ascribed to St. James the Less, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, and was enriched by the hymns and prayers of St. Ephrem, James of Saroug and other Fathers of the Antiochian See.

#### WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF THE MARONITE LITURGY?

The Maronite Liturgy is the Syriac liturgy of St. James of Jerusalem, originated and developed as follows:

1. St. Peter and other Apostles brought the liturgy of the Last Supper to Antioch where it developed.
2. Then, this early liturgy of Antioch was ascribed to St. James the Less, first Bishop of Jerusalem, and modified for use at Jerusalem. In its Greek form, this liturgy of St. James was used throughout the entire ecclesiastical jurisdiction or "patriarchate" of Antioch.

3. A later translation into Syriac gave the Syriac liturgy of St. James or the Maronite liturgy.

#### DOES THIS LITURGY, THEN, HAVE ANY RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER EASTERN LITURGIES?

Of course, since the same liturgy of St. James was used throughout the entire patriarchate of Antioch and, thus, was the source of

#### A. When both parties are Maronite:

- a. If they have their Maronite parishes the groom's pastor has priority to perform the marriage ceremony.
- b. If the groom has his Maronite parish and the bride does not his pastor has the same priority.
- c. If the groom does not have his Maronite parish and, thus, has a pastor of another Rite, whereas the bride does have her Maronite pastor, the marriage is to be performed by the pastor of the bride because he is of the same Rite as that of the groom.

- d. If neither one has a Maronite parish, the groom's pastor has precedence unless the groom requests a Maronite priest to perform the wedding ceremony.

B. When only the groom is Maronite and the bride is Catholic but non-Maronite, the groom's Rite and, then, pastor have also precedence. Hence:

- a. If the groom's pastor is of another Rite, the groom is allowed to request a Maronite priest to perform the ceremony.
- b. Or else, his pastor has priority over that of the bride, were both pastors of a Rite in which the bride's pastor would have had priority if both parties were of that Rite, like in the Latin Rite.

C. When the groom is non-Maronite but Catholic and the bride is Maronite, the groom's Rite and pastor have precedence.

D. When the groom is non-Catholic and the bride is Maronite (or Catholic), the bride's Rite and pastor are the only ones to be considered, for here apply the rules of mixed marriages.

2. Modifications to the preceding rules may be permitted for sufficient reasons in some cases. In some others, a dispensation or permission of the local Ordinary.

#### ARE THESE RULES, THEN, REQUIRED FOR THE VALIDITY OR ONLY THE LICENCY OF MARRIAGE?

Generally speaking, these rules concern the liceity (lawfulness) rather than the validity. In some instances, however, the validity itself may be endangered if they are not applied: for instance, if two Maronites have their marriage performed by a priest of another Rite who does not have any jurisdiction over them.

A person, then, must always declare his exact Rite to his priest.



realize his Rite and heritage, there are canonical reasons of great importance, especially in the case of sacraments.

#### HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO A MARONITE'S RELIGIOUS LIFE IN GENERAL?

A Maronite is supposed:

1. To belong to a Maronite church especially when there is one in the area.
2. To receive all sacraments in this church and, thus, have all his children baptised and receive all sacraments there.
3. In case of a great distance, or hindrance, or a lack of a Maronite church, he can belong to any other Roman Catholic parish, but he is expected to declare his Rite to the pastor of this parish, especially when sacraments are to be received.

#### HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO BAPTISM, OR HOW IS A PERSON MARONITE?

1. Children, without distinction of sex:
  - A. They have the Rite of their father no matter who baptised them or where their baptism took place. Thus,
    - a. when both parents are Maronite the children are necessarily Maronite;
    - b. when the father alone is Maronite the children are also Maronite.
  - B. They have the Rite of their mother when the father is non-Catholic. Then, the children of a Maronite woman married to a non-Catholic are Maronite.
  - C. These rules disclose those which apply to the administration of the sacrament of baptism.
2. Adults, that is after 14 years of age for males and 12 for females, can become Maronite as follows:
  - A. If they convert, they can choose the Maronite Rite.
  - B. If they are Catholic and have valid reasons they can transfer to the Maronite Rite after a permission of the Apostolic See.

#### WHAT RULES APPLY IN CASE OF MARRIAGE?

1. The Rite and, then, the Pastor of the groom have precedence. Thus:

several other Eastern liturgies. As a matter of fact, the Maronite liturgy belongs in the West Antiochene branch of the Eastern Catholic Rites and has similarities with the eastern rites in general.

#### WERE THERE ANY OTHER FACTORS WHICH MODIFIED THE MARONITE LITURGY?

There have been several which mostly tended to "westernise" or "latinise" it: contacts with the West, papal orders, missionaries' influence, psychological factors, etc.

#### WHAT ARE SOME MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MARONITE LITURGY?

1. The Maronite liturgy is rather of a "popular" or "public" type.
2. The faithful have a large part in its performance, especially the server.
3. The music and chants are usually of uncomplicated structure.
4. The prayers and hymns, expressing the feelings and needs of the people, reflect at the same time the image of the Maronite Community itself.

#### SOME SIMILARITIES WITH THE LATIN LITURGY:

1. Vestments (almost the same).
2. Church furnishing.
3. Sacred vessels.
4. Some parts, gestures and prayers of the Mass. (See a Maronite missal.)

#### WHAT LANGUAGES ARE USED IN THE MARONITE LITURGY?

Two:

1. The Syriac or Syro-Chaldaic or Aramaic spoken by Our Lord.
2. The Arabic, language spoken at the present time by the Maronites in Lebanon.

#### CAN THE MARONITES USE ENGLISH IN THEIR LITURGY?

The question of language has never been an obstacle. In fact, since many Maronites fled to Cyprus centuries ago, the Maronite Mass has been celebrated in Greek and Aramaic. In the beginning, the Mass and liturgy were celebrated in Aramaic, but when the people began to lose interest in the Aramaic language because they failed to learn and speak it, the prayers to be said aloud were recited or chanted in Arabic, which became the language of the people after



the 16th or 17th centuries. The essential and important prayers of the Mass and liturgy, however, were always said in Aramaic. The Maronite Mass, therefore, should be translated into the language of the people in order to accommodate them. This has been done throughout our history for centuries.

In Australia we hope that we will have Masses said in English and Aramaic as well as now in Arabic and Aramaic.

*Note:* Greek was the official language of the Patriarchate of Antioch but not of the people outside the Hellenised towns. Syriac was by far the most widespread and commonly-spoken language. The Maronites, as well as the Monophysites, kept the Syriac which was their liturgical language. The liturgy of Antioch was celebrated in Syriac and Greek at the same time. The present liturgies of the East are derived from the liturgy of Antioch.

#### WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE MARONITE MASS?

1. The Maronite mass, like any other mass, includes the mass of the Catechumens and the mass of the faithful.
2. This latter part is called "anaphora", and corresponds to the Canon of the Latin mass although it is not as fixed as the Canon is.
3. The Bread and Wine are prepared by the celebrant right at the beginning of the mass.
4. Each main part of the mass includes other small parts and prayers, some of which are common to masses of all rites.
5. Con-celebration or the offering of the same mass by several priests at one altar is permissible.

#### SOME FEASTS AND INDULGENCES:

##### 1. Feasts:

- St. Maron, February 9th.
- St. John Maron, March 2nd.
- The 350 Maronite Martyrs, July 31.

2. A plenary indulgence has been granted to all those who visit a Maronite Church or Chapel on St. Maron's or John Maron's feasts, under the usual conditions.

#### ARE THE TEXTS OF THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS READ AT THE MASS THE SAME AS THOSE OF THE LATIN MASS?

No; nor are they necessarily the same in the other eastern rites, for these texts have been chosen in the past by different people without any centralisation.

Argentina with 4 churches, 50,000.  
Cuba with 2 churches, 20,000.  
Mexico with 2 churches, 30,000.  
Chile with 1 church, 15,000.  
Venezuela with 1 church, 15,000.  
Other South American nations, 30,000.  
North America:  
Canada with 2 churches, 75,000.  
United States with 53 churches, 400,000.

#### THEIR CANON LAW AND ITS APPLICATION IN AUSTRALIA

##### DO THE MARONITES HAVE THEIR OWN ECCLESIASTICAL LAWS?

The Maronites have always been proud of their Lebanese Synod of 1736, which was approved by Pope Benedict XIV in 1741. Prior to that time, the Maronites had their own rules and Nomocanons, such as the "Book of Guidance" and the "Book of Life or Canons". The Maronites have convoked sixteen important Synods which issued rules and regulations. The first Synod was held in 1580; the last took place in April, 1934. Since 1949, the Holy Father has approved and published books on Canon Law for the Eastern Churches. These Canons were promulgated in the form of Decrees. The first Decree concerns Marriage (1949); the second pertains to Canonical Procedure (1950); the third deals with the Establishment of Religious Orders and the Temporal Properties and discusses the Laws on Persons: i.e. Pope, Patriarch, Bishop, Parish Priests, Laymen (1957).

IS THE CANON LAW FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES DIFFERENT FROM THE LATIN CANON LAW?

There are differences in the codification of the laws for the Eastern and Western Churches; however, the general laws are the same. The Holy Father has indicated a desire that the Eastern Catholic Rites update and publish their special laws at the same time the Latins revise and publish their Canon Law. Special commissions have been appointed by the Holy Father to revise and compile the Canon Laws of the West and the East.

##### DOES THIS CANON LAW BIND THE MARONITES IN AUSTRALIA?

Yes, since July 1973 where an Archbishop nominated for the Maronite Church.

##### IT IS THEN IMPORTANT TO KNOW ONE'S RITE AND CANON LAW?

Of course. Beside the manifold reasons why a Maronite should



2. Four for the women:
  - A. Two are connected with two corresponding orders for men: Anthonians and Baladites.
  - B. Two are for their own: The Congregation of the Holy Family and that of St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus.
  - C. Besides, there are some monasteries of cloistered sisters.
3. They all number about 1,200 and have about 204 institutions including monasteries, convents, schools, hospitals, etc.
4. The religious, as well as the lay priests, devote themselves to parish services, intellectual and missionary work. Some choose the contemplative life or retire as hermits.
5. A few institutions have been established outside Lebanon, like in some Arab states, South America, Africa, Brazil, Australia, Argentina, etc.

#### MARONITE SEMINARIES:

1. Minor seminaries go usually along with the major seminaries.
2. A special seminary for late vocations.
3. The Society of Jesus trained a great number of Maronite priests in the Oriental Seminary of St. Joseph's University in Beirut.
4. A Maronite seminary was lately dedicated in Washington, D.C. for American born prospective Maronite priests in the United States.
5. University of the Holy Ghost (maronite Order).

#### HOW MANY MARONITES ARE THERE AND WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

1. The official and principal country of the Maronites is Lebanon, near the Holy Land. Lebanon has 55% Christians and 45% Moslems. The Maronites form about 35% and count over half a million.
2. There are about as many outside Lebanon:
  - North Syria with a bishop in Aleppo, 4,000.
  - Egypt with a bishop in Cairo, 4,000.
  - Africa, with 3 churches, 60,000.
  - Australia with 7 churches, 120,000.
  - Europe with churches in Rome, Napoli, Paris, Marseille, Madrid, 5,000.
  - South America:
    - Brazil with 4 churches, 1,500,000.

#### HOW IS THE MARONITE LITURGICAL CALENDAR ORGANIZED?

1. The Maronite liturgical calendar follows rather the life of Our Lord. For instance, the Advent goes along with the events which prepared the birth of Our Lord.
2. Not all Sundays have a special Epistle or Gospel. On several of them it is the date of the month which is followed.

#### SOME MARONITE DEVOTIONS:

1. To Our Lord: Christmas Novena, Lenten devotions, Holy Week Services, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.
2. To Our Lady: Blessing with Our Lady's Picture in a special ceremony.
3. To the Saints: Blessing with the Saint's Picture in a special ceremony.
4. Some of the most beautiful of these devotions are: Christmas novena, Holy Week services and devotions to Our Lady.

#### PRAYER SAID BY THE PRIEST WHEN, AT MASS, HE ELEVATES THE HOST OVER THE CHALICE:

"O Father of truth, behold Thy Son, a pleasing Victim to Thee. Accept Him who died for me, and through Him may I obtain the remission of my sins. Behold the Oblation made to Thee: accept it from my hands and reconcile me and recall not the sins which I have committed before Thy majesty".

#### HOW DO THE MARONITE AND LATIN LITURGIES DIFFER?

The Maronite and Latin liturgies differ in their traditional prayers, hymns, chant, modes and vestments, as well as in the theological aspect expressed by the prayers. "While the theology of the Occident has always stressed the actualisation of the Eucharist by an engagement of the Christian in the world, and while the theology of Byzantine Christianity continues to celebrate the divine liturgy which the risen Lord accomplishes in His heavenly glory, the Maronite liturgy celebrates the Eucharist in the expectation of the coming of the Lord. The Maronites, in their liturgy, are painfully aware of the fact that we are not actually in the glory of the Lord and in the plenitude of His Redemption — that we are awaiting it. On the order hand, they realize in faith that this sacramental sign is really "rahbouno", a pledge of the glory to come, and "zouodo", a viaticum which transforms a being into a pilgrim on the way to his home, "the house of the heavenly Father".



The Maronite liturgy, therefore, emphasizes the necessity of purification for all mankind before the second coming of Jesus Christ. It interprets more accurately the ideas of the early Christians who were awaiting the second coming of the Lord. This same idea is clearly stressed in our divine liturgy after the Words of Consecration: "Do this in memory of Me . . . UNTIL I COME AGAIN". Moreover, the Aramaic spoken by our Lord, Jesus Christ, has been for centuries and still is used in the Maronite liturgy. Some prayers in the Mass date from the 5th century or earlier. Latinization of the Maronite Mass began during the Crusades and continued for many centuries; but now the Hierarchy is working to restore the genuine Maronite traditions in the Mass, which they hope to use soon.

#### IS THIS ANCIENT MARONITE LITURGY RICH OR POOR?

The Maronite liturgy was and still is very rich according to the Maronite tradition. It contains more than 22 anaphoras, or canons, for the important feasts of the year. There is a different form of Consecration in each of the 22 anaphoras. The Maronite liturgy, as mentioned before, derives from that of St. James the Less, which was initiated in Jerusalem and developed in Antioch. The Maronites, therefore, share this same heritage with the Chaldean Rite, the Syrian Catholic Rite, the Old Syrian Rite, the Malabarase and Malankarase Rites of India. Ever since the time of the Apostles and the first centuries of Christianity, the Church of Antioch was a great missionary centre for the Catholic Church.

#### WHAT ABOUT THE MARONITE USE OF HOSTS AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION UNDER BOTH SPECIES?

Both unleavened breads were in common use among the Maronites. Their priests were distributing Holy Communion under both species until the latter part of the 17th century, when this practice was discontinued due to the influence of the "Latinizers".

#### WHY DO THE MARONITE CLERGY NOW ADMINISTER CONFIRMATION IMMEDIATELY AFTER BAPTISM?

Throughout the early centuries, the Maronite clergy, like all the Eastern Rite clergy, were administering Confirmation immediately after Baptism. In 1596, at the first Maronite Synod of Kannoubine, Rev. Fr. Dandini, the papal Delegate, imposed upon them many disciplinary rules and regulations borrowed from the Council of Trent (1545-1563). He also tried, but failed, to impose upon them: (a) all the Decrees of the Council of Trent; (b) the revised calendar of Pope Gregory XIII; and (c) the Latin computation which the Latins used for marriage impediments. This is how the Latinization of the Maronite Rite started.

3. Actually, this collaboration is needed due to the social and political environment of the community as well as to the small size and number of faithful of each diocese.

#### WHAT IS A CHOR-BISHOP?

1. A Chor-Bishop was in the primitive church an auxiliary bishop in the surrounding countryside who assisted the bishop who had his residence in the capital. The Latin church had Chor-Bishops up to the 9th century.

2. In the Maronite Rite, a Chor-Bishop is endowed with some pontifical privileges, especially that of pontificating on various occasions. He can wear the episcopal cross and carry the crozier.

3. Thus, he has the greatest similarity with perhaps the Prothonotary Apostolic of the Latin Rite, endowed with the same privilege.

4. Practically and commonly, he is called "Monsignor".

#### CAN THE MARONITE CLERGY MARRY?

1. I wish the question were asked otherwise. For instance, in the Maronite Rite, can married men become priests? In all Rites of the Catholic Church, indeed, a member of the clergy can never marry.

2. But, in some Rites, among which the Maronite Rite, a married man can become a priest. Actually there are no Canonical rules or religious reasons prohibiting it, and this situation is to be understood in its historical and social context.

3. Married priests, however, cannot be made chor-bishops or bishops.

#### DO MARONITE PRIESTS HAVE THE MAJOR AND MINOR ORDERS?

Of course they do; but while the major orders are before the same as in the Latin Rite, some of the minor orders bear different names though they confer the same power or function.

#### MARONITE RELIGIOUS ORDERS, THEIR ROLE AND INSTITUTIONS:

1. Four for the men:

A. Three follow the rules of St. Anthony, the hermit: the Anthonians, the Baladites and the Aleppines (Mariamites).

B. One follows rules similar to those of some western orders: the Congregation of the Lebanese Missionaries or Kraym.



representatives. He enjoyed a religious and a political power. It was later on that bishops or archbishops became real Ordinaries and, by the same token, received a greater authority.

2. Hence, generally speaking, now, the Maronite Patriarch still plays a religious role as well as an eminent national role in Lebanon and even the Near East. He is considered to be a father, a leader and a pontiff.

3. Canonically, he enjoys legislative, juridical and coercive power in spiritual as well as temporal matters within the limits of the entire Patriarchate. Beyond these limits, for instance in the United States, and in Australia he has the authority to supervise the liturgical matters of his Maronite Community.

#### THEIR PRESENT SITUATION

##### HOW IS THE MARONITE CHURCH ORGANIZED?

1. The Head is the Patriarch called the "Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and the Whole East", who has at the same time his own diocese.

2. There are Bishops who assist him:

A. Two are his Vicars.

B. About twelve others are Ordinaries in their dioceses.

3. The Patriarch is elected by the Bishops, and, together with them, he appoints new Bishops in conjunction with the Holy See and according to some defined procedures.

4. Each diocese includes parishes having:

A. Pastors, assistants and curates.

B. Committees of lay people who assist the pastor in the temporal administration of the parish church and properties.

5. Obviously, the Holy See can always take any measure seen necessary or fitting.

##### IS EACH BISHOP INDEPENDENT IN HIS DIOCESE FROM THE PATRIARCH?

1. Historically and originally, as implied above, the bishops were the representatives of the Patriarch. Later on and gradually they acquired more autonomy.

2. The present legislation is giving them more authority and each one is a real "Ordinary" in his diocese. Nevertheless, all harmonise their work with the Patriarch at the "community level".

Among the agreements at the Council of Kannoubine (1596) was that of administering Confirmation separately from Baptism with a Bishop as the Ordinary Minister. Some years ago, His Eminence, Paul Peter Meouchi, and the Maronite Patriarchal Synod decided to return to their tradition and confirm a candidate immediately after his Baptism, as all clergy of the Eastern Rite Churches have done and still do. There are good reasons to support this practice, as the following quotation indicates; "Baptism is linked only with salvation, the remission of sins, the new creation, entrance into the Church (circumcision), and above all with belonging to Christ. Confirmation is concerned only with the "gift of the Spirit" defined above all by the experience of the first Pentecost. But it would be wrong to make of them totally separate entities. For the primitive Church they form together one rite of initiation (Acts, 10/44-48). Theologically they both derive from the initial mystery of the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan (John 1/19-34). In any case, especially in Paul, Christian life is indissolubly one in Christ and in the Spirit" (Sacramentum Mundi, Confirmation, p. 406).

##### HOW DID THE MARONITE LITURGY BECOME SO LATINIZED?

Many factors, such as the Crusaders, the Roman Delegates and the Maronite Seminary in Rome, contributed to the "Latinization" of the Maronite liturgy. The willingness of the Maronites to prove their loyalty and catholicity to the Church of Rome started their adaptation and conformity to many latin customs. Also, the Roman Delegates, having no knowledge of the Aramaic language or Maronite customs, insisted that the Maronites adapt to Latin customs. Even nowadays, many Christians are familiar with only one Rite, usually the Rite in which they were reared and educated. Ecumenism, as emphasized in Vatican II, brought about a deeper knowledge of, a better relationship with and a keener interest in the Churches of the East and West. With this ecumenical renewal and the evident discontinuance of outdated liturgical practices in mind, the Maronites recognised the need for retaining traditional concepts, while at the same time updating their liturgy in conformity with the Decrees of Vatican II.

#### MARONITE PATRIARCHATE

##### WHEN DID THE MARONITES START HAVING THEIR OWN PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH?

At the beginning of the 7th century, the Maronite clergy, religious and laity, members of the Patriarchate of Antioch, were keeping



good relationships with the Emperor of Byzantium, the defenders of the Council of Chalcedon, and with the Pope of Rome. However, at the time of the Arab invasion, in 635, they were severed from the world and persecuted for being Chalcedonians and friends of Byzantium. Moreover, the Antiochian See had not had a Chalcedonian Patriarch since 610 A.D., when the last Patriarch was massacred by the Persians. Byzantium tried to remedy the situation by appointing a Patriarch with residence in Byzantium (Constantinople), but this Patriarch was unable to help the Chalcedonians and the Maronites of Northern Syria at all, because he was so far away from his people. Therefore, after 702, Byzantium discontinued appointing a nominal Chalcedonian Patriarch of Antioch.

As for the Maronites, the establishment of a strong Hierarchy was a matter of life or death. "Since the end of the 7th century or the beginning of the 8th century, the Maronites ordain a Patriarch and Bishops from their own monasteries". (Denis of Tell Mahre.) At that time, the election of a Patriarch was conducted by the clergy and laity. The Patriarch of Antioch was not suffragan to Byzantium, and therefore the Maronites did not have to request the permission of Byzantium. Rome, at that time, did not interfere in elections. She limited her intervention to remedying abuses only. According to Maronite tradition, the name of the first Maronite Patriarch was John Maron. He exercised Jurisdiction over the Chalcedonians (Maronites) and handed it down to his successors. It was only at the time of the Crusades that the Maronites were able to re-establish relationship with Rome. The Holy See then recognized the Maronite Patriarch and approved and sanctioned his title as Patriarch of Antioch. The Maronite Patriarch participated in the 4th Lateran Council, in 1215, and Pope Innocent III confirmed his rank and jurisdiction.

#### WHO WAS THE FIRST MARONITE PATRIARCH?

The first Maronite Patriarch was St. John Maron who lived in the seventh century. He studied first at the convent of St. Maron and then completed his education in Constantinople. He was elected Patriarch of Antioch in the late seventh century and had to remove his See from Antioch to Lebanon. Not only was he a good administrator but he also defended the Catholic faith against the heretics.

#### HOW DID THE MARONITE PATRIARCHATE ORIGINATE?

1. The Patriarchal See of Antioch became practically vacant since the year 609.

A. During all the seventh century, only "nominal" or "titular" Patriarchs were appointed, and, for political conditions, they lived in Constantinople.

B. They were so helpless to the Catholics of Antioch that since 702 and during the first half of the eighth century no Patriarch was appointed at all. The vacancy was then complete.

2. It was during this period, from the seventh to the middle of the eighth century, that the Maronite Patriarchate was established in order to occupy the vacant See of Antioch. Some documents lead to believe, that the first Maronite Patriarch was elected in the late seventh century.

#### THERE IS A CONNECTION, THEN, BETWEEN THE MARONITE PATRIARCHATE AND THAT OF ANTIOCH?

There surely is. The Maronite Patriarch was elected in order to continue the succession over the Catholic Patriarchate See of Antioch founded by St. Peter the Apostle before he went to Rome. That is how his title still is the "Patriarch of Antioch and the Whole East".

#### WAS THE ELECTION LEGITIMATE?

It certainly was for the following reasons:

1. It was necessary because the See of Antioch could not remain vacant especially in the then political and religious conditions.
2. It was normal and common at that time to elect local religious leaders and to have more local autonomy than now.
3. Above all, it was explicitly recognized by the Holy See, later on.

#### WHAT HAVE BEEN THE OUTSTANDING QUALITIES OF THE MARONITE PATRIARCHS?

The Maronite Patriarchs have been known for their asceticism, their piety, their zeal and their saintly life. Some of them were hermits before they became Patriarchs while others sought refuge, during persecutions, in caves and grottoes. Some died for their faith or performed miracles. Some others were prominent scholars and writers. One European traveller characterized some of them stating "their staffs are of wood, but they themselves, they are of gold".

#### WHAT ARE THE ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF THE MARONITE PATRIARCH?

1. Historically and originally, the Patriarch was the real leader of the Maronite Community, and the bishops were rather his